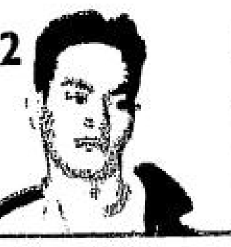
Inquest / A2

Jerson's killer unmasked: It was Barton!



■ World / A10

G8 writes off debts of 18 poorest nations

■ Across / A18

Padaca aides thwart attack on her home

■ Business / B1

Big Japan firms eye RP mining projects

■ Sports / A28

Tyson declares career over after humbling defeat

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, June 13, 2005 ★★ 70 pages / 8 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 185 P18

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Sanctuary for Ong good only until warrant served

THE SANCTUARY the Catholic Church has provided Samuel Ong is good only until a warrant of arrest is served against the former deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation who claims he has the original tape of a telephone conversation purportedly showing President Macapa-

SANCTUARY/ A4

Pulse of the People

By the PDI Bureaus

WHAT does the ordinary Filipino think of the Senate and House "jueteng" investigations that uncovered allegations that members of the First Family had received jueteng payola? The INQUIRER *conducted random, nonscientific nationwide interviews of the common man, the military and police and this is what they said:*

PULSE/ A8

A HUGE Philippine flag is carried past the Quirino Grandstand during Independence Day celebrations. In her speech, President Arroyo said no one is above the flag or the law that holds the country together.

ERIK ARAZAS

Senators urge Arroyo lawmakers to resign

By TJ Burgonio, Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

SUGGESTIONS that Representatives Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo and Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo quit to save the presidency are gaining support even among President Macapagal-Arroyo's allies in the Senate.

Administration Sen. Richard Gordon yesterday said the resignation of the two lawmakers was crucial to the survival of the Arroyo administration now buffeted by allegations of corruption and electoral fraud.

Although the charges had not been proven, public perception that Ms Arroyo's son and brother-in-law had received huge payoffs from "jueteng" was weighing down heavily on her credibility to govern, Gordon said.

"They should not wait for the President to ask them to resign. In the interest of the country, without admitting guilt, the two should offer to resign, take a leave and face the Ombudsman," Gordon said in a phone interview.

Resignation would be the

SENATORS/ A8

GMA calls for end to 'dirty politics'

No mention of scandals in Freedom Day speech

By Christine O. Avendaño

SHE CALLED for an end to "dirty politics" but avoided mention of "The Tape." She pledged to wipe out corruption spawned by "jueteng" within a year's time but made no reference to relatives allegedly mired in it.

In an Independence Day speech before a lean crowd of supporters at the Luneta, embattled President Macapagal-Arroyo also appealed to the nation: "In this great national day, I ask you, my countrymen, to help me be a good President."

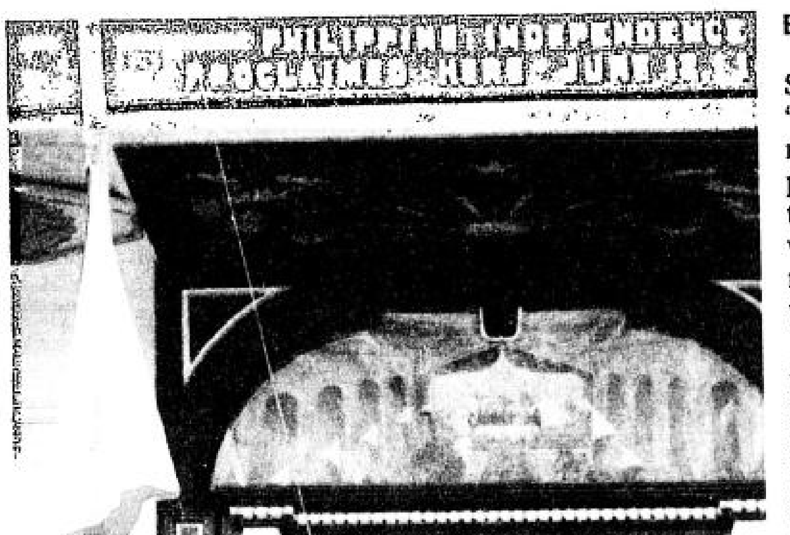
The celebration of the 107th anniversary of the country's independence from colonial rule occurred amid deep divisions among Filipinos and calls from Ms Arroyo's critics for her to resign.

The calls were spurred by testimony at the Senate by jueteng informers who implicated the President's husband, their elder son and a brother-in-law in the taking of bribes from illegal gambling, and the surfacing of a controversial audio tape supposedly suggesting Ms Arroyo's involvement in an alleged attempt to rig last year's elections.

Ms Arroyo has ordered an investigation of her relatives but has made no direct public comment on the tape controversy.

Her staunch ally and Senate President Franklin Drilon had urged Ms Arroyo to use Independence Day to make a significant statement about her relatives' alleged involvement in the illegal

HELP ME/ A6



VICE President Noli de Castro leads the traditional flag-raising ceremony at the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite—hometown of the Philippine revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo—as part of the Independence Day celebration.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OVP

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo greets the crowd that attended the 107th anniversary celebration of Philippine Independence at the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OPS-NIB

Examine conscience, GMA told

By Christian V. Esguerra, Philip C. Tubeza and Norman Bordadora

FACED with scandals, President Macapagal-Arroyo should examine her conscience and step down if she really cheated in last year's election, Bishop Teodoro Bacani said.

But she should fight on if she did not cheat, the prelate said.

Bacani urged Ms Arroyo to carry out a "sincere examination of conscience" and said that, during her soul-searching, she should ask herself if she had indeed orchestrated electoral fraud, as alleged by whistle-blower Samuel Ong.

"If indeed she had cheated in the election, in conscience she should return the position she had stolen," Bacani said in an interview with the Church-run Radio Veritas on Saturday. "If not, she should stand her ground."

But first, Bacani said, the President should "look deep into her heart, to look at the truth, and decide accordingly, according to the light that God has given her."

Calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation have mounted since Ong, a former National Bureau of Investigation official, went public with an audio tape purportedly proving vote-fixing in the May 2004 presidential election.

Ong said the tape in his possession contained wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and that there were three other "master tapes"

EXAMINE/ A4

3 'nations' at war on Independence Day

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE PHILIPPINES, Asia's oldest democracy, yesterday celebrated the 107th anniversary of its independence, teetering precariously on the edge of the most dangerous political crisis ever to threaten the 11-month administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

The anniversary found the country as divided as it was in 1898 when independence from Spanish rule was proclaimed. The historic event was preceded by a bloody feud between two revolutionary factions—one led by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and the other, by Katipunan supremo Andres Bonifacio who was executed in the course of the conflict.

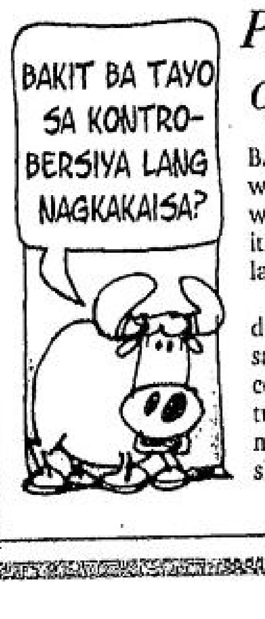
Yesterday, the anniversary was celebrated by three "nations" at war with one another—one represented by the sitting government; the second group called for a "day of mourning"; and the third group celebrated the triumph of non-state informers whose squealing in the public arena on alleged corruption and rigging of the 2004 election is being used as the basis for a campaign to bring down an elected government through extralegal and extraconstitutional means.

The multifaceted political conflict presents a sad spectacle in the midst of a fiscal crisis, which the country is just beginning to overcome. This succession of financial and political crises has raised disturbing questions over whether the embattled Arroyo administration and whether the constitutional system upon which Philippine democracy rests could survive these multiple blows.

Let there be no mistaking it is not only the survival of a regime that is at stake in the current crisis. It has stretched close to breaking point the fabric of a constitutional and legal system built on a foundation of the rule of law and civilized political rules of political competition.

Regime opponents are pushing the system

3 NATIONS/ A21



BAKIT BA TAYO SA KONTRO-BERSIYA LANG NAGKAKAISA?

PMA chief sees 'Day of Embarrassment'

BAGUIO CITY—Unlike in other countries where Independence Day is celebrated with national rejoicing, in the Philippines it is marked by public hand-wringing, lamented a top military official.

Lt. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy, said the Philippines was probably the only country where Independence Day is turned into an "international embarrassment" by leaders engaging in political skirmishes. He was referring to the illegal

PMA CHIEF/ A21

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will have cloudy skies with rainshowers & thunderstorms while Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers & thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY ERIKA A. SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/06/13/05

2 Indon hostages rescued

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Army troops rescued early yesterday morning two of three Indonesian tugboat crewmen who were kidnapped by suspected Muslim extremist guerrillas in March near the country's treacherous sea border with Malaysia, the military said.

The men, who were shaken but unhurt, were recovered before dawn near Indanan town on Sulu island after a firefight between troops and Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, according to Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu.

None of their Abu Sayyaf captors were caught and no casualties were reported among government troops.

Erickson Hutagaol, 23, and Yamin Labuso, 26, were snatched on March 30 while sailing near Malaysia's Sabah state along with a third Indonesian named Ahmad Rosmaidi, 32, and eventually taken to Sulu.

They were seized by an armed group calling itself the Jamiat al Islamiah of Southern Philippines, according to military officials. They said the kidnappers had links with the Abu Sayyaf, a militant group with ties to al-Qaida and Jemaah Islamiyah.

The group demanded a $790,000 ransom, but the Indonesian government said it would not pay for the freedom of the three fishermen employed by a Malaysian company.

"They looked pale and hungry," Task Force Comet chief Brig. Gen. Alexander Aleo described the Indonesians who were flown to this city yesterday morning.

But Aleo could not provide details of the rescue operation, saying he had been instructed by Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza not to give out any information because President Macapagal-Arroyo had yet to be informed of the rescue.

"I have to report first to our President," Braganza told the INQUIRER before leaving for Cotabato City to attend the Independence Day flag-raising ceremony at the 6th Infantry Division headquarters yesterday morning.

Reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo, however, said members of Military Intelligence Group 9 (MIG9) and the military intelligence battalion of the 1st Infantry Division located the hostages while they were being held in a temporary camp of the Abu Sayyaf.

Working with troops under the 33rd Infantry Battalion, the operatives rescued the two Indonesians while encountering an undetermined number of Abu Sayyaf bandits.

The rescue took place three weeks after Commodore Rufino Lopez Jr., Naval Forces Western Mindanao commander, had told reporters here that the three Indonesian hostages had been transferred to Sulu.

Reports had it Rosmaidi was being held elsewhere in Sulu. Troops were trying to find and rescue him, Aleo said.

Military officials said no ransom was paid for the two Indonesians, who were held by followers of Albader Parad, an Abu Sayyaf commander on a United States list of wanted terrorists.

The Indonesian Embassy in Manila offered its thanks for the successful rescue.

In recent years, Malaysian and Philippine authorities had intensified patrols in the vast sea near where the Indonesians were seized to deter Muslim guerrillas, bandits and other armed groups from roaming the area. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Dona Pazzibugan; AP and Reuters*

CARMIEZINAS NICOLOSI

PDI's Inquest mystery solved: Barton did it!

AND IT all came down to this.

After 13 weeks of tension and intrigue, Inquestors from all over converged on Makati on Saturday night, each of them sure they had the answer to the one most important question: Who killed Jerson Morales?

There was suspense, music and partying at Temple Bar at Greenbelt 2, as the first newspaper-based adventure mystery came to an end.

When Grand Inquestor Karen Antonette Amata of Pampanga started reading Inquestor chapters in the INQUIRER last March, she had no idea she would be P100,000 richer three months later.

"You should enjoy the game," said the 28-year-old physician. "The prize is just icing on the cake. The money is your reward for a job well done. Fun is the keyword."

And fun she did have when she joined the adventure, not only with her friends but with her mother and 15-year-old brother as well.

"My mother cost me a lot," Amata laughed, remembering the time they didn't agree on the answer to a particular question. Giving in to her mother's choices, she made two mistakes, which she thought ruined her chances of winning.

That, of course, turned out to be untrue, as Amata went home with the grand prize anyway, while four others went home with P20,000 each—Pamela Chua of Makati City; Andy Jayson Nahine of Digos City, Davao del Sur; Imelda de Vera of Sta. Maria, Bulacan, and Maria Cielo Sandahan of Banilad, Cebu City. Enrique Mapue of Balagtas, Bulacan, brought home an iPod.

THE INQUEST ADVENTURE

So, what does it take to win a game like Inquest?

Amata offered a few tips: "The grace of God, a little bit of luck, and instinct.".

Registration for Saturday's private revelation party started at 8:30 p.m., with Inquestors lining up to present their Inquest MMS messages which served as their invitation.

The party started at 9:30 with breakout band Hale playing their hits "Broken Sonnet" and "The Day You Said Good Night."

The evening also featured the launch of the new Philippine Daily Inquirer video.

MTV VJs KC Montero and Cindy Kurleto hosted the program, which began with the introduction of the six suspects—in the flesh. Montero added comic relief to the tension surrounding the wait, looming around Pippo Apacible whom he said was the most likely killer.

After calling on the "police investigators" in charge of the case, the revelation was made with the dramatic arrest of… Barton.

Barton was handcuffed and ushered by the "police" through the middle of the cheering crowd before exiting the bar.

INQUIRER vice president for marketing Donald Lim then took the stage to announce the winners and present the prizes.

To end the program, Sugarfree came onstage, playing favorites like "Sinta," "Prom" and "Mariposa."

The program ended at 11 p.m. but the party continued until midnight with food, dancing and mingling among Inquestors. The event was co-sponsored by MTV and Epson. *Kate Pedroso*

Pinay from Italy wins Mutya title

ITALIAN-Filipino Carmiezinas Nicolosi beat 23 other young women for the Mutya ng Pilipinas title in ceremonies held at the Clamshell II in Intramuros on Saturday. She was also declared Best in Swimsuit.

Miss Photogenic and Best in Long Gown Katharina Koegel, a German-Filipino, was first runner-up. Pangasinan's Arabella Hanesh, who is part Jordanian, was second runner-up, while crowd favorite Abby Cruz from Quezon City was third runner-up. Pakistani-Filipino Namkeen Hameed was fourth runner-up. *(See photo in Metro, Page A23)*

This year's Mutya pageant had a record number of representatives from the Filipino communities in Australia, Europe and the United States.

Nicolosi, a dance and aerobics instructor in Italy, will represent the Philippines in the Miss Asia Pacific International in China next year.

Armin Adina

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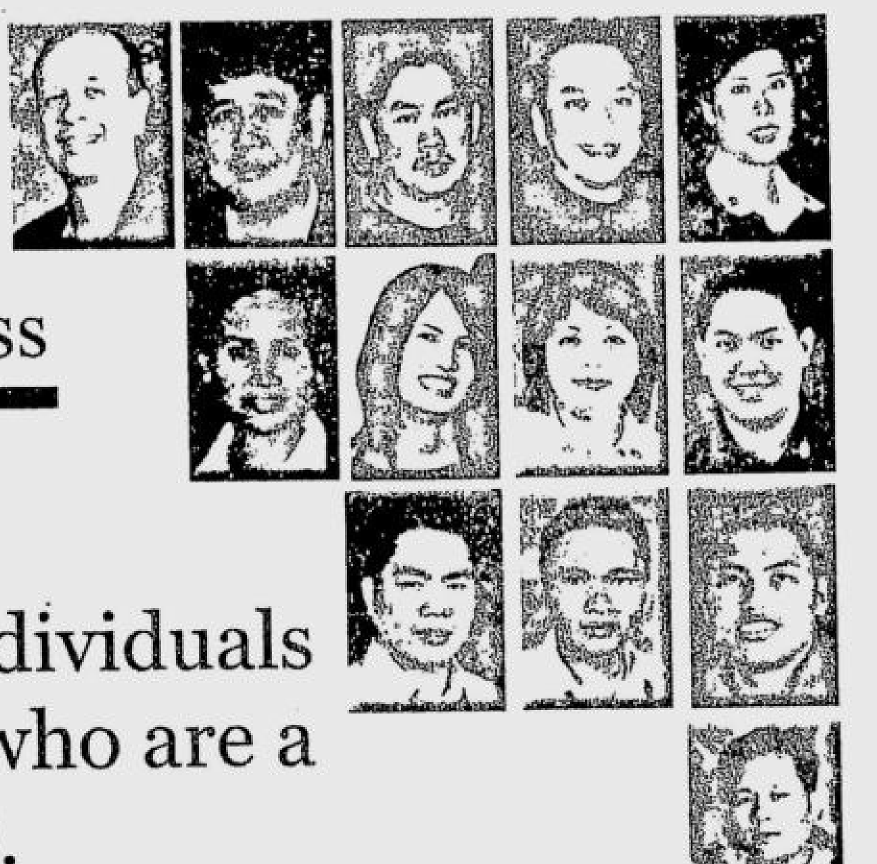

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Lifestyles

Despite challenges, Cordillera folk farm on

KIBUNGAN—As the milky sun pierces the mountain mist, Melvin Dolo wraps her baby in a blanket that she slings on her back to start a long day working edible gardens draped around towering peaks in the northern Philippines.

The 25-year-old Madonna of the cabbage patch, her cheeks all ruddy due to the cold climate, wields a hoe on a tiny plot situated on the edge of a cliff some 1,930 meters above sea level, doing her bit to supply the salad bowls of the country.

Up here on the roof of the Philippines, visiting plots held in place by retaining walls of rocks hauled up from the riverbed thousands of meters below is like walking into a pastoral landscape painting.

A swarm of flies soon brings a jolt of reality, an unwanted by-product of tons of chicken manure used to coax the thin mountain top soil to nurture potato, carrot, cabbage, radish and leek crops, as well as carnations.

"It's a hard life," says Dolo, who fell in love and chose to drop out of university to become a teenage bride six years ago. "We would work nights if it were possible."

Rain or shine, life is an unending battle with leaf miners, diamond-backed moths and other pests that eat up the cabbage leaves or bore into spuds and carrots, bringing financial ruin.

The mountain farmers of the Cordillera region "supply more than half of the temperate vegetable needs of the Philippines," says Dominador Dongla, the market inspector of the wholesale vegetable market in nearby La Trinidad, the capital of Benguet province.

Despite the rich array of produce, this region of 1.4 million people, populated mainly by cultural minorities collectively known as Igorots, remains one of the poorest in the country.

Chinese threat

Now the farmers of the Cordilleras face a new threat—cheap produce from China.

According to Cameron Odsey, regional chief of the Department of Agriculture, the region is now under threat from a flood of cheap vegetable imports, especially from China.

"It's actually one of the big issues now facing the region," he says. "They are pressuring the government to try and restrain trade agreements with China."

Odsey says although cheaper imports have yet to make an impact on production from the region, farmers are worried about their future.

The Cordillera produce is trucked overnight from remote corners of the region to the La Trinidad trading post, where some 4,000 wholesalers buy up between 1,000 and 1,500 tons of vegetables every day.

Space a premium

In the vertical terrain, space is a perennial limitation, officials say.

The average Cordillera landholding is "less than half a hectare" per family and many do not have irrigation systems, limiting incomes in areas where rice is the favored crop, says Odsey.

When the children inherit the farm, there is often not enough land to go around.

"I hope they can finish school, so they would be spared this kind of life," Dolo says, gesturing to her five-year-old son and 16-month-old daughter.

A TRADER sorts out vegetables at the giant trading post in the La Trinidad valley. AFP

Some 57.6 percent of the people of Mountain Province—and 38 percent of residents of the five provinces that make up the Cordilleras—earned less than P13,000 a year in 2000, official data shows.

Difficult living

In Cordillera villages like Lubon, "seven out of 10 families have members who work abroad," either as maids, nurses or at some other jobs, says Sarah Gambulao, an official of a village organization.

"Clawing at the earth is a difficult way to make a living," says Hilton Aniwey, who is putting three of his four children through college on the proceeds of his quarter-hectare potato and cabbage spread in Bauko town.

"We don't raise farm animals like chickens, sheep or cattle because they would eat all the crops," he tells AFP. "If we sell (the vegetables) at P10 or above per kilo, we make a profit. Anything below that we lose money," he adds.

Government policy

Since 1987, the national government has shifted policies to "expand agricultural investment into the highlands," says Odsey.

"Prior to 1984, most investments in agriculture were in lowland agriculture," he adds.

Hauling the produce to market is just one of the logistical challenges due to the region's isolation. The Cordilleras are linked to the rest of the country by a single highland highway system that is prone to landslides and is perennially eroded by spring water seeping out of the rock.

In some areas, cabbage heads and sacks of potatoes are hauled up the ridge-top road by way of tram lines formerly used to bring ore from now abandoned gold mines. Trucks are jacked up by the axles and revved up to winch up the vegetable baskets.

Aggie dep't project

The agriculture department recently completed a seven-year, $32.7-million aid project mainly financed by Asian Development Bank loans. The project built farm-to-market roads and communal irrigation systems in 82 Cordillera villages, 54 of them with household incomes below the poverty threshold.

The project also reforested denuded watersheds and trained farmers in the town of Kibungan and other areas to be more discriminating in the use of pesticides.

Household incomes in rice-growing project areas have since risen by up to 305 percent, while incomes in corresponding vegetable farms increased by up to 131 percent, Odsey says. *AFP*

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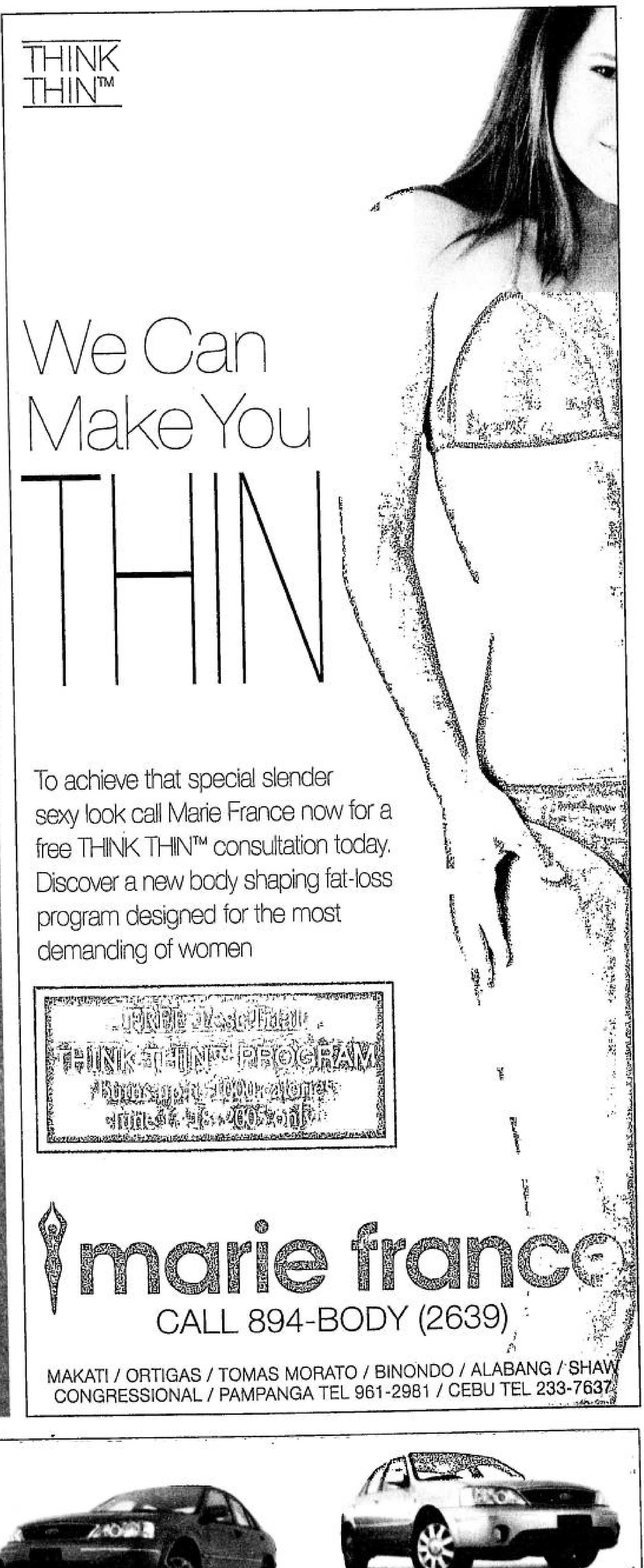

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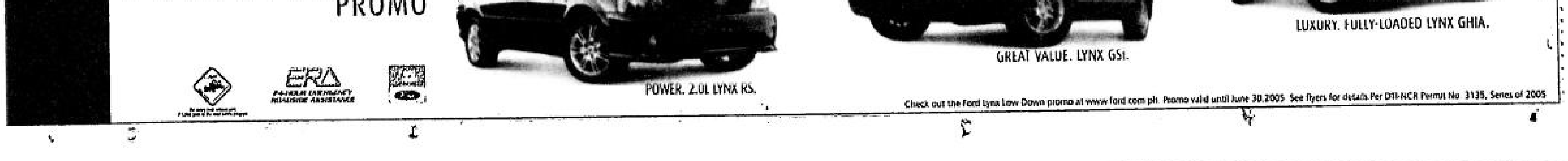

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Examine conscience, GMA told

From page A1

held for safekeeping by a Church leader and other people.

The controversy over the tape followed a "jueteng" scandal involving alleged payola for the President's elder son, Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo of Pampanga, and brother-in-law, Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo of Negros Occidental.

Not by chance

Bacani said Ms Arroyo should realize that the scandals now hounding her administration did not occur by mere happenstance.

"Nothing happens by chance [but] everything can lead to something better," he said. "She should ask herself, look deep in her heart to know the Lord's message for her and the country. She has to make the most important decisions at this point in her life and our history."

Bacani said Filipinos were discontented over widespread "corruption and incompetence" in government and these were the ones really destabilizing the Arroyo administration.

"Once everybody begins feeling these, the government would really be destabilized," he warned. "The people would really react."

Radical changes

While he called for sobriety, the prelate asked the government to allow the public to ventilate its grievances through peaceful demonstrations. "If not, emotions would explode," he said.

Before that point is reached, he suggested that Ms Arroyo make "radical changes that are necessary to curb corruption."

"That's what the people are angry about," he said.

Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, Bacani's successor in the Diocese of Caloocan, earlier warned that the situation was ripe for another people's revolt or coup.

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, the man whose accusations about the involvement of officials in gambling payoffs triggered the controversy, said the situation was indeed "unstable."

But both Iñiguez and Cruz said they were not giving up on the President's capability to deal with the controversies.

Economic policies

Iñiguez urged Ms Arroyo to rethink her economic policies that supposedly served foreign interests.

Cruz said she should once and for all turn herself into a "populist" President who would focus all government resources to alleviating poverty.

This way, she could avoid a "people power" revolution, the bishops said.

Bacani seemed cool to the idea of another popular uprising.

In case the President agrees to resign, he said the constitutional provision for succession should be observed, he said.

Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino called on the political opposition to get its act together.

Aquino, a leader of the Edsa I revolt, said dissension in the opposition was preventing it from presenting a united front should Ms Arroyo decide to hold a dialogue with her opponents.

Divided opposition

He said Ms Arroyo should initiate a dialogue with the opposition. "But before that, we in the opposition should decide what do we really want and what [do] we want her to do," he said.

He said that the President needed to act since the jueteng and election-rigging scandals had left her with a credibility problem.

Doubts about GMA

"It would be very difficult for her to govern because she has a serious credibility problem," Aquino said. "She should clear up all these scandals no matter who gets hurt. She should start with Iggy and Mikey and later with Mike."

Aquino said Ms Arroyo's latest statements were not enough and that concrete action was needed.

Fr. Joe Dizon, the priest whom Ong had sought out to help him find refuge among the Catholic religious, called on government officials and military authorities to withdraw their support from Ms Arroyo.

In a homily during a Mass held on the sidewalk just outside the San Carlos Seminary in Makati, where Ong is hiding, Dizon said: "(Ms Arroyo) should tell the country about her role in the high crime of stealing the elections. If she doesn't have anything to do with it, then she should say so."

The priest, who was schooled at the San Carlos Seminary, likened Filipinos to the people whom he said Jesus was referring to in yesterday's gospel.

"The people are already weak. There's too much poverty," Dizon said. "Jesus looks upon us and he feels compassion."

As in the gospel where Jesus sent out his apostles, Dizon told those at the Mass that it was up to them to tell other Filipinos that the people's will would soon reign and that God was behind their cause.

He said the faithful must not lose hope as truth had a way of finding its way.

"[As early as May 2004] we've sounded off that there had been massive cheating," said Dizon.

In Bacolod City, protesters estimated by organizers at 30,000 urged Ms Arroyo to initiate economic reforms that would benefit the ordinary people.

Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra said the rally was not meant to seek the President's ouster but "to gather an enormous number of people who can send a loud cry" that Malacañang and Congress could hear.

"We want an immediate stop to the abuses of corrupt government officials," he said. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Sanctuary for Ong good . . .

From page A1

gal-Arroyo rigged last year's elections, a Church official said yesterday.

Ong's lawyers, however, said no charges of illegal wiretapping could be brought against Ong unless the persons whose conversations were allegedly hacked filed the complaint.

Also yesterday, Senators Rodolfo Biazon, Ramon Magsaysay and Richard Gordon joined a clamor for the tapes of the alleged wiretap to be authenticated by an independent foreign agency. "This will clear things up," said Gordon.

Ong's revelations came after Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye released on Monday a copy of the alleged wiretap of Ms Arroyo's telephone conversation with a man who politicians said was Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

In the tapes, the female speaker was heard pressing for a one-million vote margin in the last elections over the late movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. Bunye at first claimed the woman's voice was the President's but later retracted his statement. However, Bunye maintained the tape had been tampered with.

On Tuesday, Alan Paguia, a former lawyer of deposed President Joseph Estrada, also released a tape of the supposed wiretap, insisting that it was the original and that the speakers were Ms Arroyo and Garcillano.

Garcillano has denied he was the man on the tape.

Give to Caesar

"We will obey the rule of law," said Fr. Anton Pascual, Caritas Manila executive director and spokesperson of the San Carlos Seminary where Ong had taken refuge. "We will give to Caesar what is due to Caesar," Pascual said. Ong had said he feared for his life since he announced on Friday he had the "mother of all tapes" of the alleged wiretap.

Two days after Ong called on Filipinos to rally behind him, few showed up at the seminary on Edsa, although Susan Roces, Poe's widow, came to express sympathy on Saturday.

Makati police kept reporters and Ong supporters from the area. Only seminarians and their families were allowed inside the facility, which houses 400 seminarians and priests.

The Southern Police District (SPD) has assembled 240 policemen to quell any disturbances on Edsa.

"Since this is a main road, we will not allow them to hold any programs here. We were ordered to tell any group that would come here to just go to freedom parks like Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila," said Chief Insp. Jaime Juadines of the SPD.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on Saturday said that Ong violated the Anti-Wiretapping Law and committed sedition.

He said he would request a court to issue a warrant for his arrest on Tuesday when offices open after the long Independence Day holiday.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the authorities would not force their way into the seminary to arrest Ong.

Safe conduct

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco also said police and Ong's lawyers were negotiating an arrangement under which Ong would be given a safe conduct pass so that he could leave the seminary without being arrested.

However, Homobono Adaza, who was engaged by Ong to join his eight lawyers after a two-hour meeting Saturday night, said: "There is no case, no crime has been committed. I'm telling the truth. They don't know what they're talking about. The problem here for the government lawyers is this: No two people are saying that they were the ones tapped. If there is no complainant, where is the case?"

"For all you know, we tapped the men on the moon," Adaza said.

Asked if Ong was liable for sedition, Adaza said, "Nobody was incited to sedition. What Ong did was to express his views about what he heard on the tape, what was told him and told the people to support him so that the truth will be known. That is the exercise of his constitutional right—freedom of expression."

Another Ong lawyer, former Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Liwayway Vinzons-Chato, denied that Ong was seeking asylum in Syria with the help of former ambassador and labor official Roy Señeres. *Tarra V. Quismundo, Michael Lim Ubac, Christian V. Esguerra, Philip C. Tubeza, Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Norman Bordadora, Leila B. Salaverria, TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño*

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'Stingy' Davide looking toward 'independence'

By Armand N. Nocum

KURIPOT (stingy). This is how Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. would like to be remembered.

This and for his historic role presiding over the impeachment trial that started the confluence of events that led to the ouster of President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Speaking at an appreciation luncheon with the media to celebrate the 104th anniversary of the Supreme Court, Davide said his retirement on Dec. 19 would mean his "independence" from pressure from all sectors, including court employees and the media.

"My departure means... independence [from employees of the judiciary] because [they] can no longer blame me if... their benefits [are not released.] Perhaps, [they'll] be free to get it after [I leave]," Davide said, referring to the criticism thrown his way for not releasing the employees' benefits from the high court's savings.

Since Davide had "full discretion to use the savings," he said it was up to him to ensure that the SC's money went to worthy projects.

"We must spend our savings on projects that would last, for projects that would strengthen the institution. And for those who have criticized me as *kuripot*, I say, it is *kuripot* not for me, it is *kuripot* not for you, it is *kuripot* for the country. [So] we'll be able to have a truly efficient, effective judiciary," Davide said.

He recalled that his term had been characterized by pressures and "attempts to impair the independence of the judiciary."

In his speech, Davide, who assumed his post in 1998, said he had remained true to his vow to maintain the independence of the high court.

"I envisioned a judiciary that is independent, efficient and worthy of public trust and confidence... Today, I again declare my independence because this is my last year in the court," he said.

Boracay folk split on issue of titling

BORACAY, Aklan—Businessmen, resort owners and residents here who used to be united in protecting their stakes on this island are now split on the issue of titling of lands on this world-renowned resort.

The stakeholders failed to reach a compromise after a three-hour dialogue with Department of Environment and Natural Resources officials who came here to gather support for the reclassification of Boracay from forest land to alienable and disposable land.

"I really think the meeting did more harm than good. If they (DENR) don't change their position, it's a futile exercise... We will never agree to their proposition," said Boracay Foundation Inc. (BFI) chair Orlando Sacay in an interview.

The BFI, whose 127 members own and operate establishments on the island, maintained that those who hold tax declarations and had developed their properties had the right to ownership regardless of the size of their land.

The DENR, on the other hand, insisted Boracay must first be reclassified as alienable and disposable land before titles could be issued. Properties exceeding 1,000 square meters in size would be disposed of through lease, direct sale or miscellaneous sale through public bidding.

The Boracay Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Boracay Small Resort Owners Association had asked the government to facilitate the land titling as soon as possible.

"We support the DENR on titling. We respect the law... We hope to find ways to remedy the situation. It is to the interest of the BCCI to have lands here titled because it's a bankable instrument," BCCI board member Charles Uy said.

The DENR is awaiting a proclamation from President Macapagal-Arroyo reclassifying Boracay as alienable and disposable land before doing a survey and issuing titles.

Undersecretary for Lands Manuel Gerochi said the DENR would push through with a cadastral survey as soon as the proclamation is out despite protests from the BFI.

"We will proceed with our action, and you are not prevented from going to court against us," Gerochi said during the dialogue. *Blanche S. Rivera*

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GMA calls for end to 'dirty politics'

From page A1

numbers game.

But no statement came.

The closest reference she made in her speech to the gambling scandal was when she said her administration intended to cut by half the incidence of corruption in government in three years' time and hopefully eradicate graft by the end of her term in 2010.

"As part of this campaign ... we also intend in a year's time to end corruption that comes from illegal gambling," she said.

Ms Arroyo reiterated that no one was above the law.

"There is a reason why the Philippine flag is above us all," she said. "This means that no one is above the flag or the law that holds the country together."

She also said: "Carve it on stone. I will show you my power and determination to strengthen democracy and keep our country on the right path."

The crowd—estimated by police at 10,000 but by some journalists as barely enough to fill a church the size of Sto. Domingo in Quezon City twice over—applauded her eight times.

After a week of rumors about a plot to oust Ms Arroyo from office, police and military officials yesterday said the threat to the government was over.

Both commands of the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces indicated they would be lifting their orders for troops to go on full or red alert.

There had been concerns that Ms Arroyo's opponents would stage massive protests but only a few dozen protesters turned up at the Chino Roces Bridge near the Presidential Palace. A few hundred attended a prayer rally on Edsa.

Threat over?

"The major source of threat has been overcome," said PNP Director Vidal Querol, head of the National Capital Region Police Office.

"There are those who want to take advantage of the situation. But it has died down. We'll just finish the day and wait for the traditional protests" from militant groups, he said.

The Armed Forces national capital command said it was ready to lift its red alert.

"There's nothing going on," said command spokesperson Capt. Ramon Zagala. "It's peaceful."

The President's men appeared to be the ones in the most celebratory mood.

The atmosphere seemed buoyant at a meeting yesterday among Cabinet members who gathered to assess the tense events of the past days.

Ms Arroyo was not at the meeting and it was Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita who presided over it.

"Everyone was buoyant and cheerful," Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the many expressions of support for the administration, the refusal of the Catholic Church to join the oust-Arroyo clamor, the loyalty of the police and military, and the support of the United States helped "effectively douse the most recent attempt to unseat President Gloria."

Thank you, too, Susan

Bunye said Malacañang appreciated the calls made by former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos for the nation to remain calm.

"Even Ms Susan Roces said there was nothing to gain from this," Bunye said, referring to the widow of the late opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Gonzalez said people had expected a "conflagration," but nothing untoward happened.

"The President is very much in the saddle," he said. He added that the Cabinet was intact.

"I don't think there are rats in our group," Gonzalez said.

Spurn destabilizers

Saying the country's democracy was under siege, Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday declared he would not abandon ship and called on the people to spurn those trying to sow disorder.

Speaking at the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite, De Castro said he was satisfied with the performance of Ms Arroyo and with their continued political alliance.

He said the President's detractors did not want this "strong alliance" to succeed as this could weaken their chances to grab power.

De Castro also said that he and the President were entitled to due process and that this must be observed in ascertaining the truth of allegations of cheating in the 2004 elections.

In the case of some members of the First Family accused of involvement in the illegal numbers game, De Castro said they, too, must be given their day in court to defend themselves.

Cebu allies back GMA

"I will ... try not to be affected by this latest challenge to political leadership and economic recovery," he said.

"I still support and trust the President."

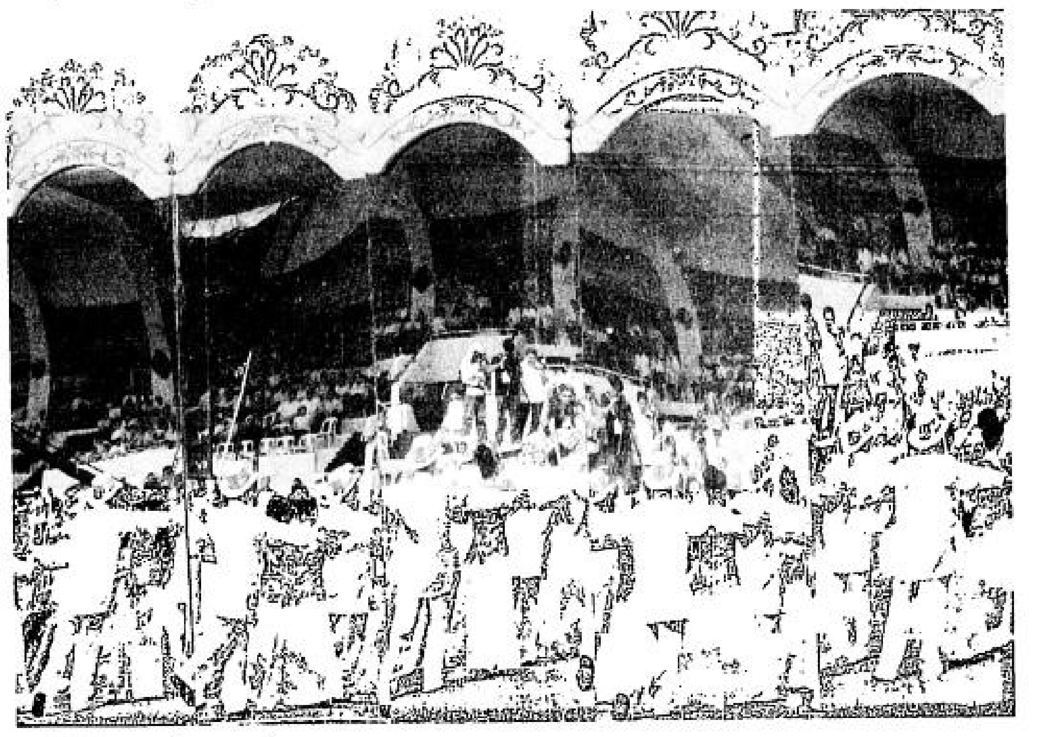
In Cebu City, Ms Arroyo's allies plan to hold a "unity rally" today to show their support for her.

Capitol legal consultant Pablo John Garcia said the rally would be held on the Capitol grounds because it was where Ms Arroyo took her oath of office on June 30, 2004.

"We should let Metro Manila know, particularly those authors of this destabilization effort, that the country is not only centered in Manila, but there are also other provinces in the country that should be heard," he said.

The rally was to be spearheaded by Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ouano and Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Alan Cesante, president of the Cebu Municipal Mayors League. *With reports from Dona Pazzibugan and Cynthia D. Balana in Manila; Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

YOUNG people representing an ethnic group make their presentation during the Independence Day rites. ERIK ARAZAS

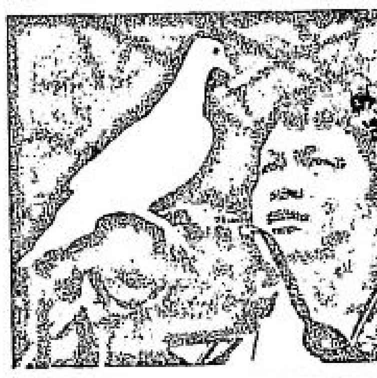


GAILY dressed men and women draw attention. ERIK ARAZAS

MEMBERS of an art group called Otyztyk carry the Philippine flag as they march in downtown Baguio to stress the need to protect forests. VINCENT CABREZA/NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A cultural group displays its talents. ERIK ARAZAS

NOT even a beautiful dove can distract INQUIRER photographer Edwin Bacasmas from his coverage of the Independence Day celebration.



WHY are you doing this to me, Bacasmas seems to be asking the dove.

BACASMAS is in a dilemma after the dove roosted on his Nikon camera.

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14 rebels killed in 2 encounters

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Fourteen suspected communist rebels were killed in two separate clashes with soldiers and policemen in Pampanga and Bataan yesterday.

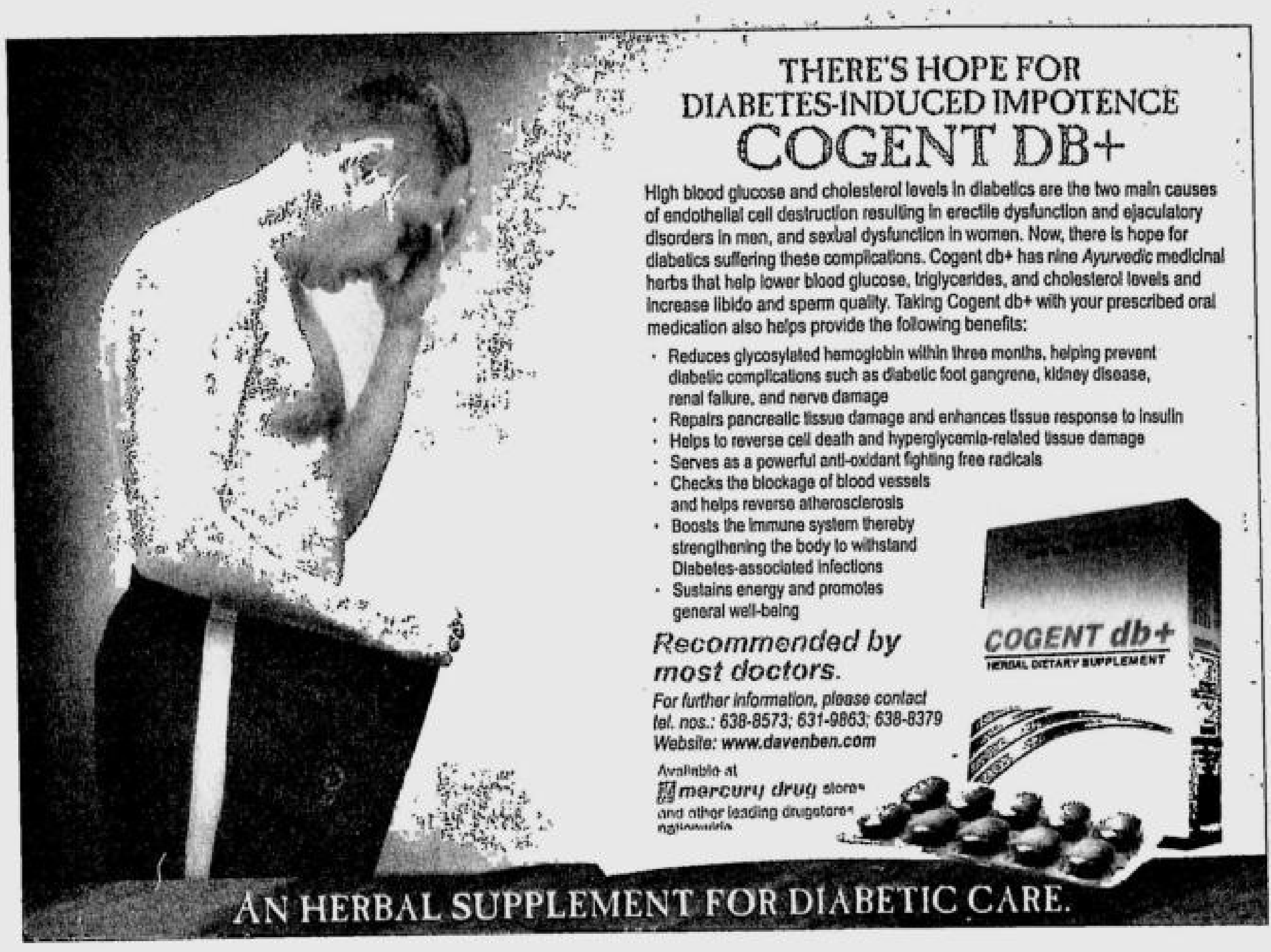
The Armed Forces' Northern Luzon Command said the 13 rebels slain in Mexico, Pampanga, belonged to the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB), the military arm of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines.

The firefight broke out at 4 p.m. and lasted more than three hours. The dead rebels had yet to be identified, Lt. Col. Preme Monta, Nolcom public information officer, told the INQUIRER.

In the Dinalupihan, Bataan, clash, Chief Insp. Luisito Magnaye, provincial police deputy chief, identified the slain rebel as Ricardo Flores, 50.

The 3:12 p.m. battle resulted in the capture of Alvin Yandan, Reynaldo Bitonio, Rolando Marzan and Leonardo Movilla. Yandan reportedly headed the RHB's party collective operating in Dinalupihan and Hermosa towns.

Magnaye said Yandan was wanted for the murder of two Aeta who were officials of Barangay Magsaysay in Dinalupihan. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*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Pulse of the People

From page A1

THE SENATE should stop the investigation. It just ends up in political grandstanding. The accused and the accusers are not given the chance to face each other.—*Roland Cabitac, farmer, Ivana, Batanes*

* * *

THE INQUIRY conducted by the senators is good. So we will know the whole story. However, my friends will lose their jobs if jueteng is stopped. When there is jueteng, everybody is happy because there's always a chance of winning. I don't think Gloria is involved. Maybe her relatives.—*Juancho Natividad, Ukay-ukay stallholder, Central Pico Public Market, La Trinidad, Benguet*

* * *

WE SHOULD legalize jueteng since government doesn't have the power to stop it. They themselves are involved. If it's legal, money would go to taxes, it would create jobs. That's better than money going to the *cobrador* (jueteng collector) and government officials.—*Rommel Manwong, 30, professor of criminology Polytechnic College of La Union*

* * *

THE JUETENG controversies and the coup rumors which destabilize the Arroyo administration would bring the nation down. We not only risk losing everything—our economy, the nation—in the long run, everybody will get hurt. The poor and less privileged will get the brunt of it all.—*Levy Laus, president of Pampanga Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

* * *

THE NATIONAL government should now stop its jueteng investigation and focus on the latest scandal—the wiretapped conversation between the President and [Election Commissioner] Garcillano. I think that's the more important issue of the day. Besides, it does not make for good TV viewing—seeing a man of the cloth leading questionable characters to prove the existence of jueteng and to prove that presidential relatives are on the take. There, you see Archbishop Oscar Cruz in white, which means purity, and key witnesses who are far from clean.—*Eric Vergara, engineer, Luzon Generation Project-San Roque Dam, San Manuel, Pangasinan*

* * *

I LIKE jueteng, why should it be stopped? It is the only recreation we poor people have. We bet if we want to. Nobody forces us to bet. Why don't they stop the game of the rich—the casinos. If there are bribes, then whose fault is it?—*Jacinto Soriano, tricycle driver, Tuguegarao City*

* * *

AS FAR as the soldiers of the military's Northern Luzon Command are concerned, we are not affected. We leave the issues to the wisdom and discretion of our leaders in the military service. We uphold the chain of command and look up to the Constitution as our mandate. We remain committed to our oath as professional soldiers. Nolcom remains apolitical.—*Col. Preme Monta, public information officer of the Northern Luzon Command, Camp Aquino, Tarlac City*

* * *

I BELIEVE that President Arroyo is involved in the scandal because her family suddenly became rich. Her family has to be on the take.—*Joel Bulawan, freshman college student, Legazpi City*

* * *

WHY JUETENG? They should instead tackle how to lower the prices of gasoline and basic commodities. Why can't the opposition just wait for the next election?—*Edgardo Enriquez, jeepney driver, Sariaya, Quezon*

* * *

THE PRESIDENT should step down. With Ong's testimony, it has become clear that she won over FPJ because she cheated.—*Dina Leones, ambulant vendor and FPJ supporter, Calamba City.*

* * *

THE MORALE of the soldiers in camp is OK—not high or low. We follow orders of our officers. But if they order us to join a coup d'état, we won't join. Because nothing ever happens. The outcome is still the same."—*9th Infantry Battalion sergeant*

* * *

WE ARE not affected by the jueteng probe because we've known about it all this time. It's public knowledge. We're no longer shocked with the pronouncements of Sandra Cam or Boy Mayor at the inquiry. They are all true. When we were watching the Senate hearing, we were all laughing because we've known for a long time that there are officials who are on the take.—*An official of the Intelligence and Investigation Division of the Albay Police Provincial Office.*

* * *

I DON'T know what jueteng is all about. I really don't care. Any change of administration would do us no better. We have survived without any help from the government.—*Abdias Arnaiz, carpenter, Maasin City, Southern Leyte*

* * *

THE PRESIDENT must resign, period.—*Roland, 18, student, Cebu City*

* * *

JUETENG will never stop but this will never be legalized because this will mean trouble. What needs to be done is for the top officials to discipline their people down the line. The audio tape submitted by (former NBI deputy director Samuel) Ong appears to be very credible. Ong wouldn't risk exposing this if it weren't true.—*Dominador Rubia, 63, tailor, Negros Oriental*

* * *

I DON'T believe that the President's family is involved in jueteng. The Senate hearings did not show enough evidence against the Arroyo family. For me, these issues, including the alleged taped conversations of the President, are all allegations to destroy the Arroyo government.—*Haido Francisco, hairdresser, Cebu City*

* * *

THE JUETENG witnesses presented detailed accounts of what they know. The tapes are another thing because with the latest technology, they can be manipulated. The issues strongly affect the economy because it is the credibility of the President that is in question. We have to be on guard because we never know what will happen next.—*Melba Cabahug, government employee, Iloilo*

* * *

THE JUETENG witnesses and the taped conversation are not credible.—*Lt. Col. Raul Farnacio, head of the 43rd Infantry Battalion based in Sogod, Southern Leyte*

* * *

THE JUETENG scandal is hearsay. There is no concrete evidence. It has no immediate repercussion on the AFP.—*Maj. Jose Maria Cuerpo, chief, 5th Civil Relations Group, Southeastern Mindanao*

* * *

JUETENG is a political issue. The AFP's focus is directed against enemy threats and securing our country and people. Hence, the AFP's morale is not in any way affected by it.—*Col. Eduardo del Rosario, chief, Task Force Davao*

Senators urge Arroyo . . .

From page A1

"highest form of statesmanship" they could do for the country, he added.

Administration Sen. Rodolfo Biazon agreed with this and other suggestions by colleagues that the President institute reforms and "discipline her family."

These suggestions, he said in an interview, should be heeded to "repair the damage" wrought by the scandals on Ms Arroyo's capacity to govern.

"If the capacity to govern is totally destroyed, this will throw the country in turmoil and desperate elements will step in to fill the vacuum. It is, therefore, important to repair the damage, and the repair will include the three suggestions," he said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon and Senators Ramon Magsaysay and Panfilo Lacson on Saturday called on the President to crack down on her family.

Drilon had suggested that Ms Arroyo institute reforms over the "perceived involvement of her family in jueteng," while Magsaysay proposed that she discipline her family and get rid of the "barnacles around her."

Lacson had refrained from calling for Ms Arroyo's resignation because he was waiting for her to take "drastic measures," such as asking the two controversial lawmakers to quit.

Iggy Arroyo, who left with his wife and daughter for Singapore on Saturday, said he and his nephew had done nothing wrong.

"Why scold us when we did nothing wrong?" he said in a telephone interview from Singapore. "If you did something wrong, then you should be disciplined. But we did not do any wrong. We did not violate the law."

While the President's allies in the Senate have realized the urgency of a crackdown on erring members of the First Family, her allies in Congress said she need not crack the whip on her husband, First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, her son and brother-in-law because the charge that they received jueteng payola was "unfair" and was a form of black propaganda.

Don't believe bagwoman

Rep. Lorna Silverio (Lakas-CMD, Bulacan) said the President should disregard the crackdown advice and wait for the outcome of the jueteng inquiry by the Ombudsman.

Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) said the credibility of confessed jueteng bagwoman Sandra Cam, who directly implicated Iggy and Mikey in jueteng payoffs, was put in doubt during the inquiry because of her conflicting statements on how the money was allegedly delivered.

"Her claim of having gone to the Batasan to bribe the two congressmen is not supported by Batasan security records and her own testimony on these events is full of holes," said Pichay, although the House leadership had yet to make public its logbook.

Cam admitted at a Senate jueteng inquiry last Thursday that she delivered jueteng money to the Arroyo congressmen right inside the House of Representatives in December last year.

Both lawmakers have denied the allegation.

The allegations of corruption, coupled with the release of an audio tape suggesting that Ms Arroyo had ordered the rigging of last year's elections, have set off street protests and calls for the President's resignation.

Political drama

The militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya scoffed at Gordon's suggestion for the Arroyo congressmen to resign, saying this was a political drama "to salvage a presidency whose mandate is highly questionable."

"Ms Arroyo should join her son and brother-in-law in the dustbin of history. Senator Gordon should stop this political madness in the name of the Jueteng Gangland and bogus presidency," Pamalakaya spokesperson Geri Albert Corpuz said.

Gordon and other administration senators said they continued to support Ms Arroyo despite earlier reports that some of them had rejected an invitation to dine with her in Malacañang last Wednesday.

Senate Pro Tempore Juan Flavier said his loyalty "remains with the administration" even as he called on the public to stay calm in the midst of the political storm.

"We should not overreact to what is happening in the country, particularly the effort of some sectors to exaggerate things to advance their political agenda," Flavier said.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, June 13, 2005
11th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 2 Cor 6:1-10
Gospel: Matthew 5:38-42

Jesus said to his disciples, "You have heard that it was said: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you this: do not oppose evil with evil; if someone slaps you on your right cheek, turn and offer the other. If someone sues you in court for your shirt, give your coat as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give when asked and do not turn your back on anyone who wants to borrow from you."

Commentary

HERE are hard sayings that go against everything in our violent societies. Before it was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (and nothing past that-even this was to militage against escalation of violence). Now we are not to oppose evil with evil but learn a new way of resisting without harm, resisting and making others see what it is they are doing and that they are doing it to other human beings, not vague notions of an enemy. To be slapped and to turn and look the person in the eye and offer the other cheek is to confront the other head on. To have something taken from you and then give more is to throw the other off-balance and to reveal that you are still who you are without what was taken. To be forced into slave labor and then to do what is not asked is to demand that the other see what they are doing and have a chance to back down. Jesus lived in occupied territory with the Roman army and these were common experiences for those oppressed-these are not easy ways to act, under duress, violence and might where people despise you. This is the practice, the discipline of Jesus-do we even respect it as teaching, let alone practice it individually and with others to hold us accountable?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Elements of forum shopping—Forum shopping exists where the elements of *litis pendentia* are present or when a final judgment in one case will amount to *res judicata* in the other. For *litis pendentia* to exist, the following requisites must be present: 1. Identity of parties, or at least such parties as those representing the same interests in both actions; 2. Identity of rights asserted and reliefs prayed for, the reliefs being founded on the same facts; and 3. Identity with respect to the two preceding particulars in the two cases, such that any judgment that may be rendered in the pending case, regardless of which party is successful, would amount to *res judicata* in the other case. (Reference: Veluz v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 139951, 23 November 2000, 345 SCRA 756, 765) (Justice Chico-Nazario, Second Division, Development Bank of the Philippines v. La Campana Development Corp., G. R. No. 137694, January 17, 2005)

BY R.B. VERA

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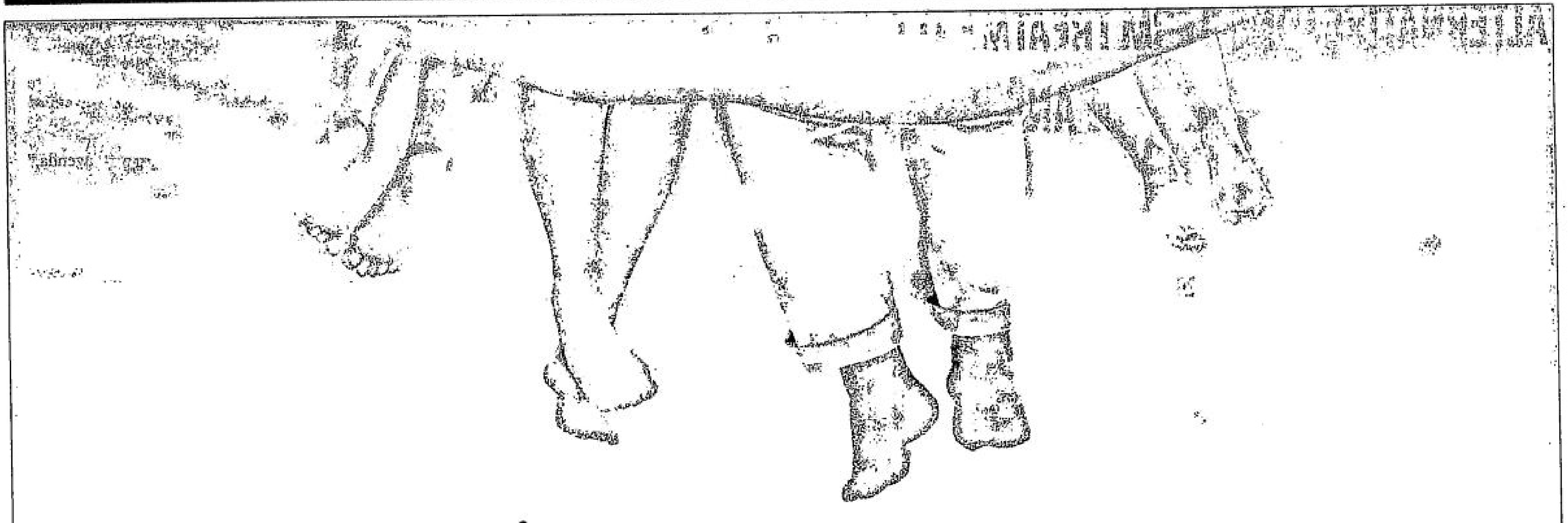

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

G8 writes off 18 poorest nations' debts

LONDON—In a historic deal, the world's leading industrial nations have agreed to immediately write off all multilateral debt owed by 18 of the world's poorest countries, most of them in Africa, amounting to $40 billion (33 billion euros).

Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia welcomed Saturday's breakthrough by Group of Eight (G8) finance ministers, while aid groups and activists warned that more remains to be done to tackle poverty in the developing world.

"Eighteen countries will have their debts cancelled immediately worth around $40 billion," British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown told a news conference after a two-day meeting of G8 finance ministers in London.

The decision by Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States concerns debt owed to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and African Development Bank.

Brown said the G8 was "fully committed to meet the full cost" borne by the three institutions, though he did not disclose how this would be achieved.

US Treasury Secretary John Snow said a "historic moment" had been reached, clearly delighted that the G8 had backed proposals hammered out earlier by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush.

"What we have here today is a little piece of history," rock singer and tireless debt relief advocate Bono, from the Irish band U2, told Sky News television.

"Hundreds of thousands, millions of lives will be changed by this news."

But he warned: "There's more to go to really make this an end to extreme poverty"—notably more development aid and an end to trade barriers and subsidies that stifle economic growth in the developing world.

BROWN REUTERS

Debt relief is a vital part of a broad strategy to wipe away chronic poverty in Africa which Blair is making a centerpiece of the G8 summit at Gleneagles, Scotland on July 6-8.

Other components of a so-called "Marshall Plan for Africa"—which could prove harder to find agreement on—are more aid to the world's poorest countries and an end to market-distorting farm subsidies in rich nations.

Uganda, one of the 18 countries to benefit from Saturday's breakthrough, called the G8 decision commendable, but added: "It is something that should have been done yesterday."

Information Minister Nsaba Buturo told AFP in Kampala—which spent $200 million a year on interest payments—that if trade barriers do not come down, then Africa's fragile economies will continue to stall.

In Rwanda, still recovering from civil war and genocide, finance ministry official Claver Gatete said money spent on debt interest would now go toward "private sector investments."

Ethiopia's finance minister Sofian Ahmed said the deal was "very encouraging" so long as there are no strings attached.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who chairs the African Union, called the G8 agreement "a welcome development"—and, through a spokesperson, expressed hope that his oil-rich nation could get similar debt relief as well.

Eighteen countries, some in Latin America, will be the first to benefit from what Brown called "the most comprehensive statement that finance ministers have ever made on the issues of debt, development, health and poverty."

They are Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Nine other countries will become eligible for 100 percent debt relief totaling an extra $11 billion over the next 12 to 18 months, after which 11 nations could receive similar debt cancellation of $4 billion—bringing the total amount of debt relief to $55 billion.

Aid groups and development analysts gave a cautious response.

"The debt deal is very good news for people in the 18 countries that will immediately benefit, and who will now see all their multilateral debts written off," ActionAid policy officer Romilly Greenhill said.

"But it will do little to immediately help millions in at least 40 other countries."

Global Insight analyst Andrea Bohnstedt said: "The devil will be in the details ... to find the mechanism to ensure the savings on debt are spent wisely" on things like health, education and infrastructure.

"Corrupt and inefficient governments are such a huge problem—and that's actually in my opinion the main factors why these countries remain very poor." *AFP*

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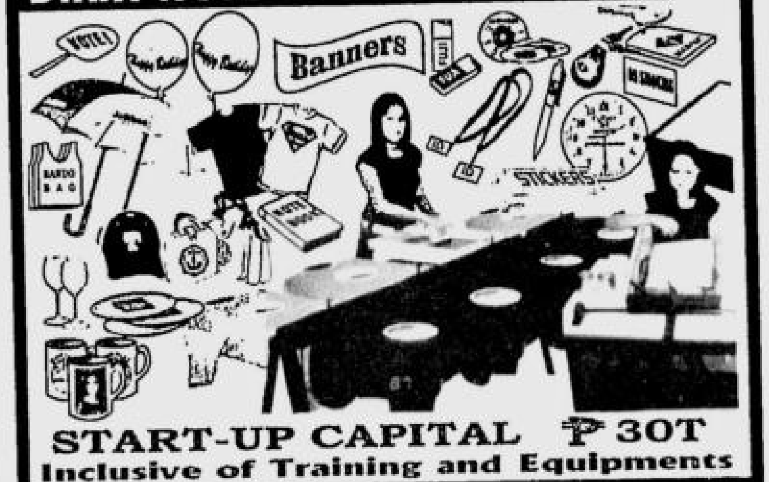

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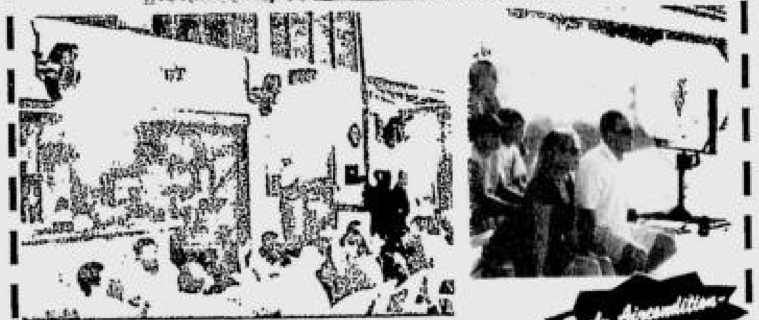

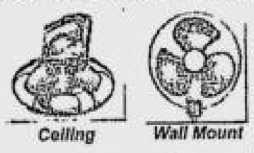

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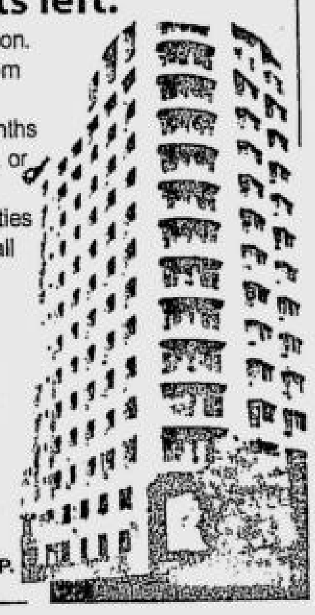

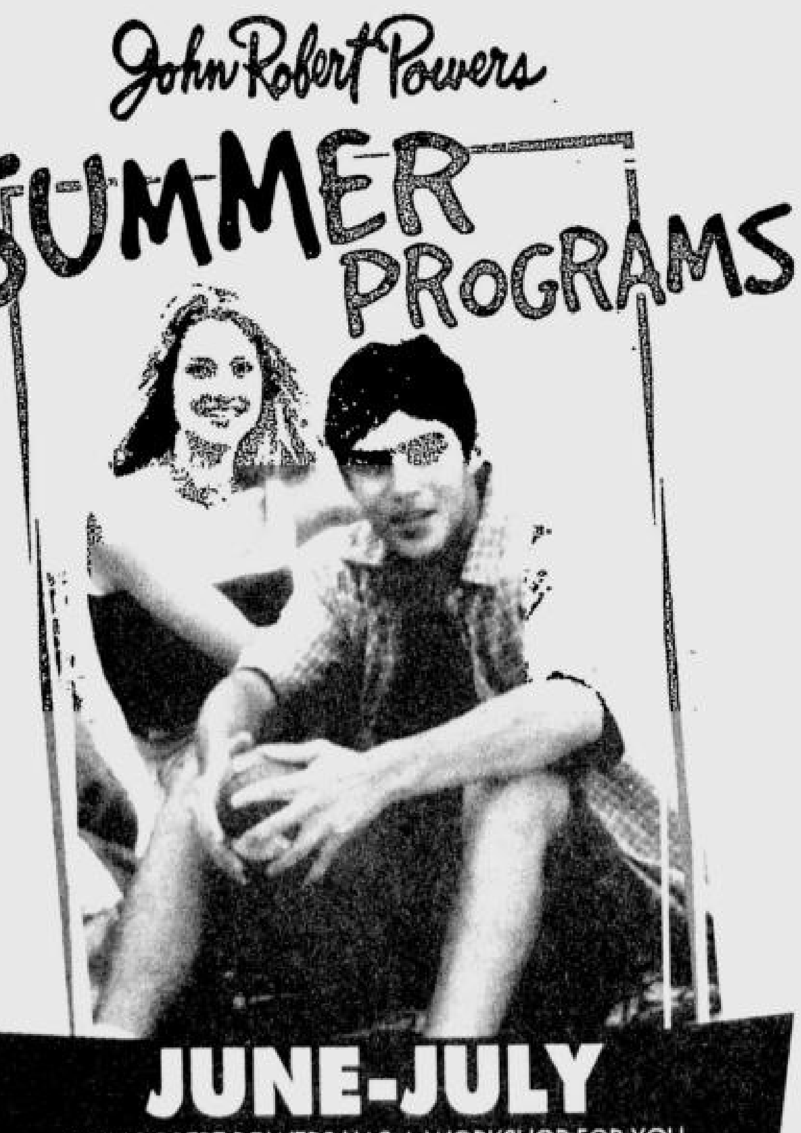

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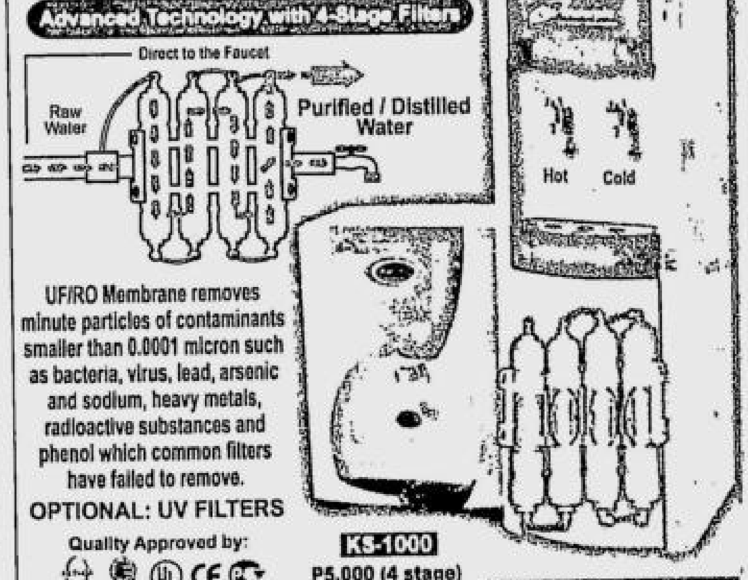

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EU leaders staring into abyss

BRUSSELS—EU leaders face one of the bloc's greatest challenges in decades this week in plotting a new course for their European project and trying to resolve an increasingly acrimonious budget dispute.

At a summit in Brussels beginning on Thursday, the leaders must decide whether to abandon the process of ratifying the European Union's first-ever constitution, knowing that it has already been rejected in two founder states.

Several members are queuing to vote this year, but the optimism with which the process of adopting the painstakingly compiled text began has been severely dampened by the popular revolt in France and the Netherlands.

Like falling dominoes since the votes two weeks ago, Britain froze the process of preparing a referendum, Denmark has seen public support shift from "yes" to "no," and surveys in Portugal and Poland show a major slump.

In Luxembourg, holder of the EU presidency and where Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker says he will resign if voters reject the treaty in a July 10 referendum. The latest poll shows backing for a "no" vote has risen to 45 percent from 24 percent in October.

With campaigning there in full swing, a choice has to be made: pause for reflection, give members more time to adopt the text, or declare it over and try to move on.

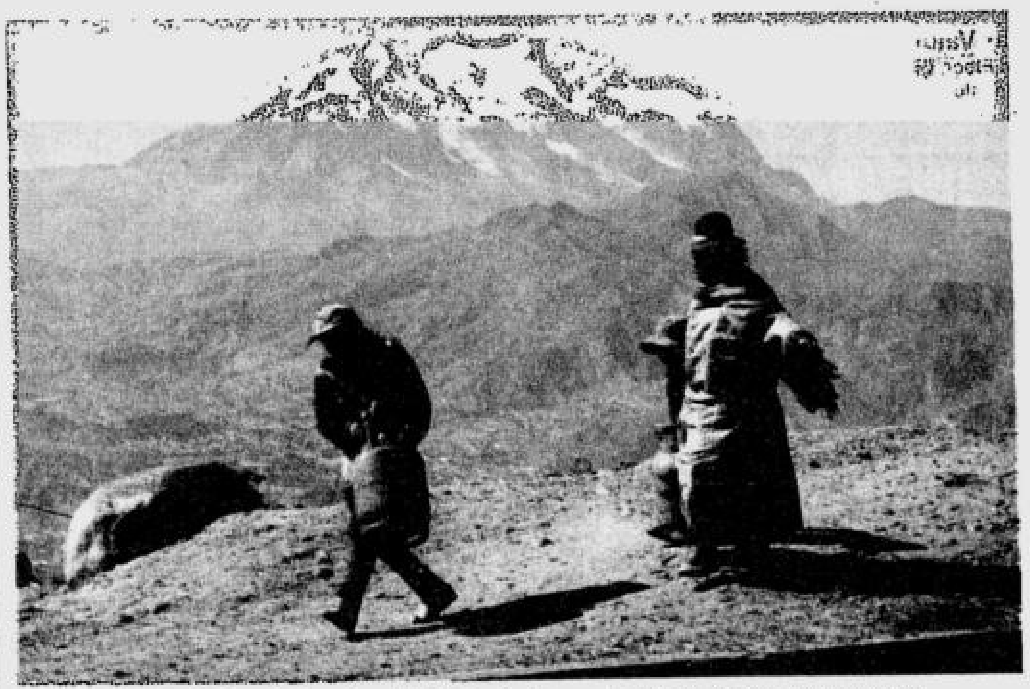
But at a moment when Europe is desperate for strong leadership, some key heads of state and government come to the table badly weakened, either by the referendums, elections at home, or economic and domestic and problems.

French President Jacques Chirac, whose country prides itself as a driving force for European integration, was particularly damaged by his decision to put the ratification process to the people. The result was a 55 percent "no" vote.

His closest ally and the other big cylinder in the EU motor, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, has been left a lame duck by a bad loss in a recent state poll and has called, many think ill-advisedly, early elections.

After being returned to power for his stance over Iraq, Schroeder's political life may depend on another international coup, this time in Brussels.

Italy's Silvio Berlusconi too is facing elections soon and the prime minister's economic problems have seen both him, and other senior officials, lash out at Brussels, brandishing the threat of an EU budget veto. *AFP*



A BOLIVIAN family heads down from El Alto to La Paz against the backdrop of the Illimani mountain with two fully filled canisters of liquefied cooking gas after the end of a 20-day shortage of fuel on June 11. Bulldozers cleared the last barricades on the main road leading into La Paz, signaling the end of a monthlong blockade that paralyzed Bolivia and triggered a president's downfall. AP

Bolivia protesters call truce

LA PAZ, Bolivia—Bolivia's capital returned to normal on Saturday as protesters called a truce with the government, allowed gasoline to flow for the first time in weeks, and pressed for a meeting with the new president to urge nationalization of natural gas resources.

Miners, rural peasants and labor groups, who forced former President Carlos Mesa to resign on Monday after weeks of massive marches, have lifted road blocks around the Andean nation but their key demands on natural gas and constitutional reforms to guarantee more rights for Indians have not been met.

Urban protesters in El Alto, a sprawling poor city in the mountains above La Paz, ended a three-week occupation at the only gasoline distribution plant for La Paz, but warned they will restart protests if they don't get answers to their demands.

Leaders from El Alto planned to meet on Saturday with President Eduardo Rodriguez who had signaled a willingness to talk, but by evening protest leaders said they were still waiting for a letter from the president.

"We haven't heard anything from him," Edgar Patana, a labor leader from El Alto, told Reuters. "I don't know when the meeting will happen. I expect within the next few days. We're going to keep asking for the nationalization of hydrocarbons."

Rodriguez, the former Supreme Court chief inaugurated on Thursday as interim president, has promised to call December elections in landlocked Bolivia, the poorest nation in South America, with nine million people.

"I don't even have my Cabinet put together, but I'm open to hearing the demands from El Alto, so that we can seek solutions. I'm pleased to invite them for a meeting in the government palace," Rodriguez said late on Friday.

In La Paz and El Alto, people lined up to refill cooking gas cylinders at distribution centers after the Senkata plant was reopened.

"We haven't had (cooking) gas for a week. We've been cooking with firewood. For a month we've been suffering," said Felicidad Morales, a mother of three sitting wrapped in a blanket at the end of a line of 300 people with yellow gas canisters outside the plant.

Lines of cars formed at stations selling gasoline. For days the streets of La Paz, at 3,600 meters above sea level, have been almost free of traffic except for taxis willing to pay triple the price for black-market fuel from hoarders.

Mesa stepped down in an effort to end the protests, which he feared were leading to civil war. He was the second Bolivian president in two years pushed out by conflict over natural gas reserves. *Reuters*

US drops hefty damages claim against 'Big Tobacco'

WASHINGTON—The US government stands accused of cozying up to its former foes in the tobacco industry after dramatically dropping the bulk of a $130-billion claim for damages last week.

The Justice Department is instead seeking $10 billion for an antismoking campaign in a fraud lawsuit against Philip Morris USA, RJ Reynolds, British American Tobacco and Brown and Williamson, among others.

The reduced figure took antismoking activists aback, and prompted some Democratic lawmakers to ask Justice Department Inspector General Glenn Fine to look into possible political interference in the case.

For critics of US President George W. Bush's administration, the development is another example of unhealthily close ties between the government and big business.

"It was an egregious example of favoritism toward a big, politically connected industry by an administration that is making such favors a hallmark of its governing style," The New York Times said in an editorial.

The lawsuit was filed in 1999 by President Bill Clinton's administration. Initially, it sought reimbursement for US government health care costs for tobacco-related ailments, but a judge threw out that claim. That left the government with civil fraud and racketeering claims.

The lawsuit is separate from a settlement struck in 1998 between the tobacco industry and US states that provided more than $250 billion to state governments.

That settlement, combined with last week's development at the federal level, left analysts expressing confidence for Big Tobacco's outlook.

Morgan Stanley analyst David Adelman said the Justice Department's reduced claim is "simply no longer a serious industry threat."

"Recognize that the worst-case outcome of the DOJ (Justice Department) lawsuit is now $2 billion in annual damages over the next five years—e.g., only approximately 11 cents to 12 cents per pack of cigarettes," he said in a note to clients. *AFP*

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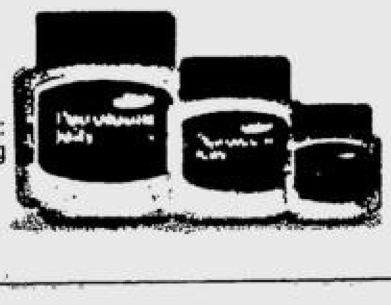

More babies, young kids going hungry in America

BALTIMORE, Maryland—Increasing numbers of young American children are showing signs of serious malnourishment, fueled by a greater prevalence of hunger in the United States, while, paradoxically, two-thirds of the US population is either overweight or obese.

In 2003, 11.2 percent of families in the United States experienced hunger, compared with 10.1 percent in 1999, according to most recent official figures, released on National Hunger Awareness Day held this year on Tuesday, June 7.

Some pediatricians worry that cuts in welfare aid proposed in President George W. Bush's 2006 budget will only exacerbate the situation. By contrast Bush plans to keep tax cuts for more affluent sectors of the population, they note.

In the working class port city of Baltimore, Maryland, Dr. Maureen Black, a pediatrician, sees numbers of underweight babies in her clinic specialized in infant malnutrition located in one of the poorer areas.

"In the first year of life, children triple their birth weight," said Black, "and if children do not have enough to eat during those very early times, you first see that their weight will falter and then their height will falter."

"If their height falters enough and they experience stunting under age two, they are then at risk for academic and behavior problems" at school, said Black. *AFP*

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Middle game

EDITORIAL

IS President Macapagal-Arroyo's fall from power, as administration critic Luis Teodoro asserted last Saturday, really "only a matter of time"? What happens in the next several days will determine the answer.

In a fundamental sense, the outcome will be determined by the positional strategies that the players in this high-risk political chess game will adopt—the positions they will stake relative to one another.

In other words, it's not something absolute, like irrefutable proof of the authenticity of the alleged Garcillano tapes, that will determine the administration's future. More likely, it is how the different players counter one another's moves that will define the crisis' eventual resolution.

Except under extraordinary conditions, this is how politics is played: virtue is relative, and everything depends on everything else. President Joseph Estrada's ouster in 2001, for instance, was by no means a sure thing. Despite the dramatic testimony presented during his impeachment trial, there was a better than even chance that he would survive the political crisis. He would have sustained lasting damage, but—the country be damned—he could have limped on to the end of his term.

But his allies in the Senate made a fatal mistake. They decided to railroad a crucial vote; more to the point, they did something that was perceived as a gross injustice. The 11 Estrada senators blocked the opening of the second Jose Velarde envelope. In doing so, they forgot (or failed to account for the fact) that the public, hooked on the televised scandal, was already a player in the game. The administration senators positioned themselves on the fateful night of Jan. 16, 2001 in a certain way, in large part because they had the numbers; four days later, an outraged public ousted their patron from the Palace.

Response and counter-response: This is the chief characteristic of the middle game. A blunder can suddenly usher in the last phase, the so-called end game. But barring an egregious move, the middle game can last for a long time.

In this particular crisis, that is exactly where we are.

The public is not yet a factor, perhaps because, as some analysts have said, we are suffering from "People Power fatigue." But the prayer-rally-turned-mass-protest at the Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila on Saturday may yet turn out to be a fateful sign of things to come. We can be sure that efforts to stage street protests, especially by left-wing organizations, will ramp up in the next several days. (For the moment, opposition icon Susan Roces has refused to play the game.)

The conduct of the various opposition forces is already a factor, and a critical one. The rigodon of companions beside tape-keeper Samuel Ong when he held his first news conference, for instance, is a sign that the various factions have not yet gotten their act together. And Sen. Panfilo Lacson's insistence on forcing the *jueteng* issue even after the tapes surfaced is driving a wedge in the opposition. To paraphrase that famous slogan from Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign: It's the tapes, stupid.

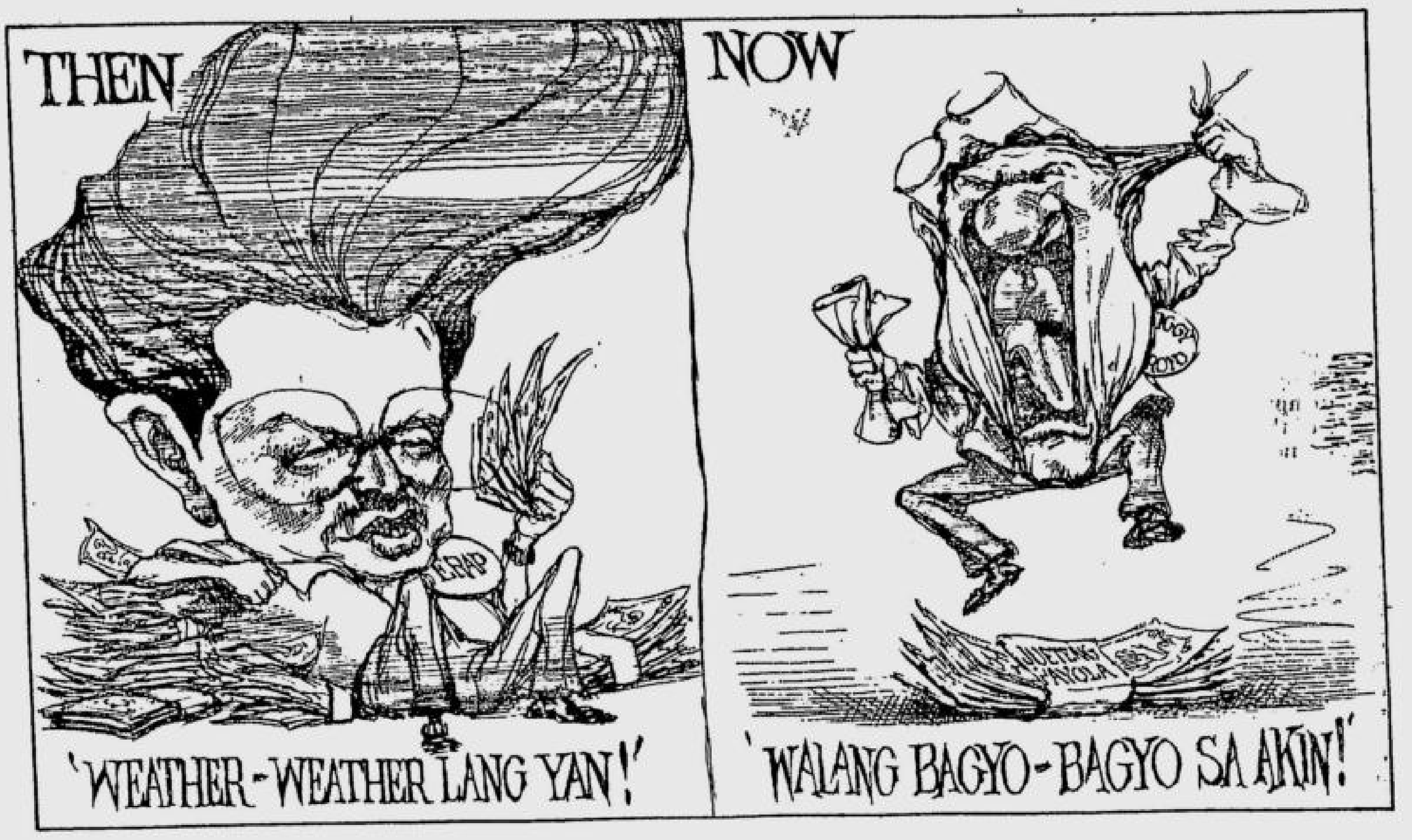
If the opposition fails to seize on the fact that the real issue that the President must personally account for is the tapes, and that the jueteng allegations are essentially a hearsay-based distraction, the end game will turn out differently.

By the same token, the President's men will work mightily to bring the issue back to jueteng, because they believe that is an issue they can "win." Thus, the proposal for the two Arroyo congressmen to resign from the House. The President's men hope that the blood from that act of sacrifice will wash over the issue of the tapes.

But if the administration proceeds to arrest Ong tomorrow, then they will help keep the spotlight on him, and on the tapes. Arroyo officials may yet decide to let things cool off for a bit, because it is in their best interests that Ong return to his previous obscurity.

Political players like Speaker Jose de Venecia may also move to fast-track the constitutional convention, dangling (yet again) the possibility of an abbreviated term for the President and the re-introduction of a parliamentary form of government.

Move, and counter-move. That is the middle game.



I shall return—Erap

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THAT'S not an exact quote from him, but that, in effect, was what former President Estrada reportedly told a reliable source who was sent to him to find out if he would be willing to serve as a transition president, in case President Macapagal-Arroyo resigns or is forced out. Yes, some quarters are already talking about who would take over, at least temporarily, while preparing for new elections, if GMA steps down. For the President, battered by the scandals around [illegible] is now like a tree in a forest, leaning and [illegible] the verge of falling as it is buffeted by strong winds in a storm. The only thing holding her up is the question of who will succeed her.

For some, the cure may be worse than the disease. Constitutionally, it should be Vice President Noli de Castro who should succeed her, but some critics think that is like jumping from the frying pan into the fire—and I don't think the Vice President is eager to jump into the fire. Indeed, opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. has urged that De Castro also resign with GMA because the two of them were both elected under questionable circumstances.

But Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye twitted GMA's critics with just that question: Who should replace GMA? Retired Gen. Fortunato Abat, now 81, who offered to head a council that would rule the country like a new dictator (he would abolish Congress and all politicians)? A leftist mouthpiece? Another actor like Rez Cortez? Or a deposed president?

Constitutionally, after the vice president, it should be the Senate President (Franklin Drilon) who should succeed; after him the House Speaker (Jose de Venecia), and then the Chief Justice (Hilario Davide). Not much better choices, we must admit. Given these alternatives, many people would rather stick with GMA.

But how can you stick with a President who cheated her rivals in the presidential elections, and whose immediate family members are neck-deep in corruption? That overturns the principle of crime and punishment.

That is why the eyes of opposition and administration leaders turned to former President Estrada who, his followers contend, is still the legal president. Indeed, the US Embassy said in a report to Washington, D.C. that Erap is the most "legally acceptable" choice.

Why "legally acceptable"? Legal experts believe that Erap was not constitutionally removed. Not one of the ways, provided by the Constitution (death, incapacity to govern, resignation, and impeachment), by which a president may be replaced was present when GMA took over Malacañang. The Supreme Court erred in declaring that Erap had resigned (he did not, there is no letter of resignation). The impeachment trial was not completed. Therefore, the takeover by GMA and the Supreme Court decision, were null and void from the very beginning, say the lawyers. Ergo, Erap is still the president.

That Erap's term of office has expired and new elections have been held do not have legal effect. The running of Erap's term of office stopped when he was illegally replaced and, therefore, he still has half of his term to serve. The US State Department, so claims my source, reviewed its archives on the Estrada case and allegedly came to the same conclusion.

That is why some leaders are now looking toward Tanay, Rizal, where Erap seems content living a relaxed life in his resort-like 21-hectare estate, where he is under house arrest. But the emissary said the former President (he still is, claims his lawyers) is like a gentleman-farmer now with his own vegetable garden, fruit trees, piggery, cattle, horses, poultry and about 500 ducks, geese, black and white swans, flamingoes and plenty of fish in a big pond over which hangs a rest house with spacious decks.

He is reluctant to be in the hot seat again, said my source, but he agreed to be a transition chief of government "for the sake of the country" during the period of preparation for new elections. He, however, will only head a nine-man council that will run the government for just one year or a maximum of 18 months, when the newly elected officials will take over. The council members will be barred from running in the elections.

During the transition, a Constitutional Commission—whose members will be appointed from the nominees of different sectoral groups, including the Communist Party of the Philippines (Joma Sison will be invited to come home and be part of it), the Muslim secessionists, the Church, businessmen, farmers, the media, etc.—will amend, not replace, the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Erap has not been idle during his confinement, said the source. With plenty of time on his hands, he has studied and analyzed the problems of the country and has written recommendations to solve them. In case he is called upon to serve his country again, he said, he is ready. He claimed to have a program of government prepared.

What are the most significant reforms is he proposing? The most significant, said the source, is the abolition of Congress during the transition period. That will save the government at least P50 billion a year and from being derailed by politics. With the savings, and after negotiating a moratorium on the payment of foreign debt, the government can then afford to suspend the payment of individual (not corporate) income taxes to give the people more spending money and boost the economy.

The draft of Erap's proposed program has 29 pages, single-spaced. This space will not be enough for us to go into all the highlights and details of the program. And it would be premature to discuss them here. But definitely, Erap will not be caught napping in case he is called upon to go back, briefly, to the position that, his followers insist, still belongs to him.

Curiouser and curiouser

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IGNACIO Bunye liked what he was saying. Whom do they want to replace GMA with?—he asked gleefully. "These wayward elements hate the President, but we ask them: Do they have an alternative leader or program? They should tell the public who they want to put in power. Will it be Fortunato Abat? Will it be Joseph Estrada? Will it be from the left or the group of Ka Roger? Will it be Rez Cortez?"

At about the same time Ping Lacson and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's allies were giving the President suggestions on how to save the presidency. Lacson said he wasn't yet joining the protest because he was giving GMA a chance to redeem herself by taking drastic measures to clean up her house. Literally: chief of them demanding that her son, Mikey, resign from Congress. Jun Magsaysay and Franklin Drilon said pretty much the same thing. GMA should discipline her family and get rid of the "barnacles around her," Magsaysay said. She should start mounting reforms if she wants to keep power, Drilon said.

They miss the point, and by a very huge mile.

The question about whom we want to replace GMA with is a stupid one. That is not something for the opposition, the administration, the protesters, or any group in this miserable country to say. That is something for the voters to say. That is why we have elections. We have elections so that the people—not the businessmen or the Church or the NGOs—can put whom they want in Malacañang. It is irrelevant who you or I want to be in Malacañang. What is relevant is who the voters want to be in Malacañang.

The question is not whom we want to replace GMA with, the question is whether GMA has the right to be president. The question is not who should be president, it is who should not be president.

The accusation that GMA cheated in the elections is not an idle one, it is a serious one backed up by direct evidence. Or at least by evidence the public can, and should, ascertain.

US Chargé d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli, of course, says this country is full of rumors and should attend to more serious things. Like what? Like helping carry out his own president's terroristic occupation of Iraq? He forgets that his own country impeached one president and nearly did so another for far less. All Richard Nixon did was break into Democrat headquarters, and all Bill Clinton did was break his marriage vows. Yet his whole country drew to a standstill on the basis of those, well, rumors.

GMA is accused of rigging the elections, and there is a tape to prove it. A tape that by most accounts is authentic. It is at least something that can be proved one way or the other. If the United States moved to impeach Nixon and Clinton on the ground that they tarnished the integrity of the presidency by their less than sterling behavior, why can't we impeach GMA for wrecking the entire meaning of the word "president" by cheating?

While at this, this country truly never learns. Bunye's question is exactly the same one we heard only 19 years ago, when Marcos was reeling from a wave of protest by an irate nation. Whom do you want to replace Marcos? Cory, Ninoy's widow, who was a plain housewife and knew nothing? Butz Aquino, Ninoy's philandering brother, who never entertained a serious thought in his head? Lino Brocka, the movie director, who thought life's dilemmas could be resolved as easily as in the movies? Jose Ma. Sison, the Communist Party boss, who imagined himself as the Filipino Mao Zedong but who preferred to live in the wilds of Utrecht rather than those of the Cordilleras? Any one of the "steak commandos" who bravely raided the bars and eating places of New York and San Francisco?

Power always creates the illusion of being irreplaceable. Had Chavit Singson not survived a near-assassination and come out to damn his pal, Malacañang would now be asking: Whom do you want to replace Erap with—the "Nora Aunor of Philippine politics"?

As to Lacson et al. asking GMA to discipline her family and reform the country, that is a load of bull. I've never trusted Lacson, who has yet to explain why he did not withdraw from the presidential race notwithstanding that he knew his staying in the contest would benefit GMA. Wasn't Lacson just strutting the other day, saying that Australian voice experts had authenticated the integrity of Sammy Ong's tape? So now, what? The logical conclusion to GMA bludgeoning the sovereign electoral will is that she should whip her family in line? What idiocy is that?

At the very least, what's wrong with it is that it presumes GMA to not know—or have a hand in—the actions of her husband and son. It presumes that she can be married for decades to Mike Arroyo and not know he is Jose Pidal. It presumes that she does not know that the cub she raised from the litter is now the Lion King. If you cannot know what is happening in your own household, how can you possibly know what is happening in the rest of the country, much less hope to reform it? Indeed, if you cannot take responsibility for the actions of your husband and son, how can you take responsibility for the actions of your government?

But the suggestion misses the point in a far more fundamental way. For the graver charge is not *jueteng* in Pampanga, it is cheating in elections. The graver charge is not robbing the poor of their cash, it is robbing the voters of their will. If you do not have the discipline to respect the voters' will, how in God's or Beelzebub's name can you possibly discipline anyone, least of all your family who take their cue from you, to respect anything? Doctor, heal thyself? Discipliner, discipline thyself! Resign.

Ah, but this country becomes more Alice-in-Wonderland-ish every day. Curiouser and curiouser.

Rules of fairness in committee hearings

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SINCE last Saturday afternoon, this text message has been flying around Metro Manila: how laudable and admirable Susan Roces is for refusing to be used and manipulated by the opposition in its attempts to bring down the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo through a street uprising. FPJ's widow calmly brushed aside proposals to summon another People Power uprising, stressing that it "would only add to our problems as a people." Saying that "my candidate is already dead," she left the door open to possible action but she made clear that "any step we will take will be in accordance with the law." Roces' statement was welcomed all around as the "voice of sobriety," a fresh departure from the demagogic calls for the ousting of President Arroyo through mass actions, which have sent the peso tumbling anew.

* * *

The plea of former NBI deputy director Samuel Ong for Church "protection" from supposed enemies out to get him, followed by his move of taking refuge in the San Carlos Seminary along Edsa, was seen by many citizens as an attempt to reprise Edsa I. It recalled the move of then Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and acting AFP Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos to seek the help of Jaime Cardinal Sin to protect them from Fabian Ver's forces as they mutinied against President Marcos.

But Ong's move was a poor parody, and it failed to draw the protective people power seen in Edsa I, perhaps, for one good reason: people couldn't understand who could be after him. After all, it had been two weeks since the controversial tapes were first exposed by Secretary Ignacio Bunye and then by Erap's former lawyer Alan Paguia. There are reportedly 10 versions by now, so that no one is sure which is authentic and which is fake; in fact, they can be bought in Greenhills, Quiapo and other places. Thus, even if Ong claims to have the "mother of all the tapes," people suspect it can't be any different from those already in circulation. Besides, he was quickly perceived as having an ulterior motive: indulging in sour grapes over his failure to be appointed to the NBI's top post. A GMA ally has also branded him a "turncoat" who allegedly flitted from Panfilo Lacson to FPJ in the last elections.

* * *

The protests against the Senate hearings on *jueteng* have mounted due to the lack of direction and the seeming blanket authority given to witnesses to hurl charges even without substantiation. The latest to protest this trend was one-time Senate chief Jovito Salonga, who recalled that during his chairmanship of the House committee on good governance in the early '60s, they followed rules and regulations that ensured a fair process. He recalled that the committee, through its legal counsel, screened witnesses first in order to distinguish between "rank, inadmissible hearsay" and "evidence based on direct, personal knowledge." Salonga stressed that the committee decided that if a testimony was "indisputably harmful to the reputation of a person," it was first heard in executive session. If a piece of evidence was not corroborated by some other evidence, then "the case should in all probability not be scheduled for public hearing." In any case, he said, if a public hearing was to be held, those who were likely to be affected adversely were notified in advance, and invited to be present at the hearing, so they could reply simultaneously to the attack.

The Villar and Lapid committees should heed Salonga's observation as many are truly appalled at the way charges are being thrown around without any evidence backing them up. Sadly, today, Salonga noted that hearings seem to be held in aid of destabilization, instead of legislation.

* * *

GMA was doubtless buoyed up by the big turnout of her supporters in the Palace last Friday evening, which included local officials from all over the country, as well as representatives from various political parties led by Lakas. Then there was the "unconditional support" expressed by the US government for her. Last Saturday's traditional vin d'honneur at the Palace was another adrenalin shot for her as it was attended by so many members of the diplomatic corps and local officialdom, led by Chief Justice Hilario Davide. These events may explain her vigorous speech at yesterday's Independence Day rites, wherein she pledged to reduce corruption in the government by 50 percent within three years, and eradicate it by the end of her term in 2010.

* * *

But I suspect that those who listened to the President, including her political allies, had hoped she were more specific on how to do just that. As the INQUIRER's headline put it, she is under tremendous pressure from her own allies to "crack down" on her family. The allegations aired at the Senate hearing—that Representatives Mikey and Ignacio Arroyo accepted jueteng payola, and that Ignacio Arroyo forged the signature of Jose Pidal—have to be proved beyond the level of hearsay. But still, even her staunchest allies have stressed that all these unsubstantiated charges against her relatives have hurt GMA's presidency, so that now they want her to tackle this problem head-on. In fact, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay has asked her to "discipline" them.

* * *

Others, however, wish that the Arroyos had insulated the embattled President from all these scandals by showing some kind of noblesse oblige. Admittedly, this is truly what makes being part of the First Family, or of royalty for that matter, very difficult: the duty to practice noblesse oblige at all times. The mistresses of Erap and their families obviously didn't have that virtue as they jockeyed to acquire incredible wealth; their insensitivity ultimately brought Erap down. Many people had hoped GMA's relatives would prove better, but even her staunch allies are disappointed with them in this score.

Illogical

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

THE FIRST thing that struck me about Pagadian were the motorized tricycles, the main mode of transport around this quaint but lovely coastal city. It was a sight I wasn't prepared for, even after a hair-raising, all-day "trucking" through five provinces and several cities, with hair-pin turns on slippery cliff-like mountain roads; and a frightening ride in a barge with my bus squeezed between a soft-drink delivery truck and an equally large one loaded with lumber across a very choppy Tangub Bay. I had to go through all this to attend Christine Ortega's MSU-IIT writers' workshop in Iligan City.

I stared long and hard at the odd vehicle with its front jutting up in the air and the passenger's seat down on ground level, wondering whether it would be wiser to walk to my hotel instead, when I noticed that all the tricycles were built the same way, and the driver assured me that it was very safe; otherwise, *"tataob yan dito."*

It was when we were off and running that I realized why. The terrain replicates Baguio, and it even seemed to me that there were more ups and downs there because the roads are shorter.

There really was logic in the queer design of the vehicles; certainly more logic than can be found in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to transfer the Southern Command and the regional offices to Pagadian.

Why? And why now?

I guess there's nothing more to add to the reasons already stated by Zamboanga City Mayor Celso Lobregat and Rep. Erico Basilio Fabian, who, naturally, vehemently objected to the idea. So do majority of the residents of that city, where the SouthCom has been based for close to three decades.

Fabian made a very good case in opposing the transfer when he guested on ANC news last May 30. He emphasized to host Karmina Constantino the most logical argument against this latest bad decision of Ms Arroyo: the cost in terms of pesos and centavos.

For the transfer of the regional offices alone, Fabian said, the government would need at least P2 billion, for initial expense alone. We are not yet counting here, he said, the subsequent operational expenses in settling down people, building offices, etc.

With the government's present financial situation, where will we get the money, he wondered, adding, very logically, that if we had that kind of money to spare on a whimsical (or vengeful) impulse, it could be better spent on the modernization program for the military. (P2 billion was the exact amount quoted by Rep. Jose Miguel Zubiri as needed in the urgent purchase of a few aircraft to augment the very inadequate fleet of the Philippine Air Force.)

And how about the social cost of uprooting over 8,000 families, and how it will affect, not the very least, the children's schooling?

As many as there are objections to this foolhardy plan are the reasons why both the SouthCom and the regional offices of Region 9 should remain in Zamboanga City. Any transfer of any of these very vital institutions will enormously affect not only the residents of Zamboanga City but also those of the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

With the seat of the ARMM government in Cotabato City, it is difficult enough for constituents in these three provinces to accomplish transactions with the regional offices; and for those line agencies whose functions have not been devolved to the ARMM, the proposed transfer to Pagadian, if realized, would result in a bureaucratic nightmare for them.

And while we're at it, we might as well re-examine the government property in Cabatangan. That property made the headlines a couple of years ago when the followers of jailed former ARMM governor and MNLF chair Nur Misuari made human shields of scores of city residents in their get-away from the compound after a gun battle with government troops.

Then regional commissioner, former ambassador and retired Rear Adm. Romulo Espaldon, in acquiring the property (some 90 hectares), was motivated by one vision, that of gathering all regional offices in one location.

Had these agencies seen the wisdom of his dream, one can only imagine, at the very least, how much they could have saved in rentals on often nondescript offices scattered all over the city, not to mention the convenience and comfort of living in housing facilities, which were an integral part of the grand plan.

Well, I saw Makati when the most prominent building was the GilArmi apartments, and I got my shoes wet when I had to wade from the road to one of the few standing structures to attend an induction, and the only plausible reason we chose it was because the convention hall rental was cheap.

The last time I visited Cabatangan on the request of Julhambri Misuari (to get their side of the story when they were being allegedly harassed by the residents in the surrounding area), the legislative building was both a garbage dump and an armory. In the main (LTP) building, what was once the beautiful office of the regional chair had been converted into a suite for Governor Misuari. My companion, a young idealistic aspiring photojournalist almost got his camera confiscated when he insisted on taking close-ups of the pile of pornographic tapes beside the huge TV set.

At the gate when we arrived, the guard, smiling broadly, told me in a conspiratorial manner: "Robot is here." At the main door, a couple of functionaries volunteered the same information in almost the same manner, as if expecting me to dance with joy at the news.

Isn't it about time for the government to make Espaldon's dream come true? It is a most logical one, don't you think?

* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Last senator standing

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

REPRESENTATIVES Mikey and Iggy Arroyo should resign. They should never have run for office, in the first place. Running for public office was their first—and most lasting—disservice to the President (who allowed it).

The administration passed its first moral test with flying colors when Luli Arroyo—unfairly perhaps—was deprived of the chance to serve the country while her mother sat as President. But then it miserably failed another test by gamely allowing Mikey Arroyo to run and run for public offices, and Iggy Arroyo to join the fray; thus establishing beyond all doubt that the fundamental weakness of the administration is the inability to see the dangers of living by a double standard.

But Mikey's and Iggy's resignation, at this point, would be an admission of the existence of that double standard, and would gain nothing for the administration. Feeding family to the wolves would remind all the administration supporters that they're merely sheep. It wouldn't inspire admiration on the part of the wolves.

This weekend saw a perfect example of how a situation ripe for exploitation was used by the wrong people, who ended up defusing the situation to the advantage of their enemy. The Estrada loyalists and the Left sent in the clowns, and jumped the gun. What therefore began as a double-barreled blast against the administration became a demonstration of the reasons the opposition lost the presidency in the first place, and why the Left, on its own, will always be on the verge of, but never quite achieving, its dream of a revolution and a dictatorship (of the proletariat).

The target of one People Power cannot be the beneficiary of another; the Marcosian relics that briefly partied under the Estrada tent have never learned this. In her heart of hearts, I think Susan Roces knows this: her constituency is not merely the Estrada camp; it is larger than that. She has proven the most loyal to the principle that leadership requires not only responsibility, but self-restraint.

You do not summon the faithful to the barricades to restore the very people who melted away in January 2001, when people went to the streets; neither do you make a call to arms in the face of an administration that proved in May 2001 that it would not go down without a fight, unless you have ensured there would be no one willing to make a personal sacrifice defending the Palace. That point has not been reached.

The danger to the President lies not in the tapes proving what the opposition has claimed all along, but in the tapes destroying the plausibility—and thus legitimacy—of her rule, in the minds of both her active supporters and those who are grudgingly willing to live with her as chief executive. This administration relies on two assumptions: that the opposition members were too busy fighting among themselves to give FPJ the support he needed, and that the Solid South unleashed a torrent of votes to put her at the top. I have expressed my belief in the former many times, though I'm a little skeptical of the latter. I think there are many people like myself who—the opposition will say naively—believe she didn't have to cheat, thanks to the incompetence of those arrayed against her.

The strategy of this administration is to appeal to a "silent majority" whose existence is, after all, statistically possible. If Joseph Estrada at his most popular, had 40 percent of the people (the percentage that voted him into office in 1998), then they are his core of support; that number may not be as large, today, but it remains significant. The other 60 percent may not be for the President, as the surveys show, but they are not for Estrada either. The pollsters and analysts can then divide that 60 percent between the different sides, but it will always be clearly against the Estrada loyalist opposition.

But let me make it clear: that the "silent majority" cannot remain silent the moment the audio tapes are proven genuine. The first conclusions would be lethal: despite the opposition's suicidal incompetence, FPJ might have won, after all, and that the torrent of votes from the South was a fake flood.

When that happens, the 60 percent—the usually silent, usually divided, majority—will vote with its feet, there will be People Power. There is no "people power fatigue," there is an all-embracing skepticism that will vanish if and when a total conspiracy is revealed. If that happens, any attempt to hide things under a fig leaf of constitutionality will be futile because the overwhelming majority of our politicians will have been proven as accomplices and beneficiaries of that crime, and we will end up with "constitutional revision" on a scale undreamed of—and unwanted—by our political class. The Church, businessmen, the middle class will move as a matter of self-preservation. It will be the golden moment of opportunity not for the Left, but for the Right.

Who, then, is the exemplar of the Right? Fortunato Abat? No way. The genuine poster child of Right-wing thinking, the kind of thinking big business, the middle class, and even a portion of the masses are susceptible to, is Panfilo Lacson. Is it too much to ascribe great satisfaction on his part to seeing the Estrada crowd bickering and elbowing its way to defeat, and the administration frantically hanging on, once more, to save itself by the skin of its teeth? Perhaps. Certainly, the administration can justifiably say that what doesn't kill it only makes it stronger. But in a controversy where the facts are few, who is the one quietly, and methodically, gathering them, if not this ex-policeman? He may be hoping that he will be the last man standing.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph/blog

'Flavor of the month'

COMMENTARY

Gemma Rita R. Marin
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE UNITED Nations has declared 2005 as the Year of Microcredit. Such a declaration provides a unique opportunity for the international community to raise awareness about the importance of microfinance in eradicating poverty; to take action on increasing access of the poor to financial services; and to enhance existing programs that promote sustainable financial systems. Toward these ends, the idea is to ensure that microcredit and microfinance contribute to the eradication of poverty as envisioned in the Millennium Development Goals.

I myself came across the world of microfinance back in 1989. My NGO then, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), was in the process of conceptualizing a scheme for its Savings & Credit (S&C) Program (under a wider integrated area development program) when it accommodated two foreign consultants sent by its funding agency to help in finalizing the scheme. Following a round of visits to the PRRM's five program areas, one of the consultants recommended the adoption of the Grameen Bank facility for the S&C Program.

One and a half decades later, microfinance has indeed come a long way in the Philippines. Several NGO-microfinance institutions have sprouted. Ahon Sa Hirap Inc. was one of the first, if not the pioneering replicator of the Grameen Bank model in the country. Other early known replicators included Tulay sa Pag-Unlad Inc. (TSPI), Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation Inc. (NWTF), Center for Community Transformation (CCT), and Center for Agriculture and Research Development (CARD). CARD eventually spun off a bank to cater to the more enterprising poor, while the NGO concentrated on the social preparation activities and financing the needs of the very poor.

The Philippine government was not about to stay on the sidelines and remain oblivious to the situation. In its determined fight against poverty, it identified microfinance as its national strategy or approach for delivering financial services to the poor. This was concretized with the creation of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) in June 1998. Among its mandates were to develop and promote microfinance by establishing the People's Development Trust Fund, strengthening the People's Credit and Finance Corp. as the forerunner of microfinance services, and enjoining private and government financial institutions to open a special window for microfinance.

The following years saw the entry of microfinance into the mainstream as the banking system began to recognize its responsibility to contribute to poverty alleviation. Through BSP Circular No. 272, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas exempted microfinance from the rules and regulations on unsecured loans issued by the Monetary Board. It reversed its policy of prohibiting the opening of banks by allowing the establishment of new banks which were microfinance-oriented. BSP Circular No. 273 also lifted the moratorium on branching for banks engaged in microfinance, and BSP Circular No. 282 opened a rediscounting window for microfinance.

A few years back, the New Rural Bank of San Leonardo (NRBSL) led and inspired other rural banks to devote a portion of their resources to this kind of lending. The support shown by the BSP to microfinance further encouraged the banking institutions to engage in it. Cooperatives and foundations such as the Punla sa Tao Foundation and ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation have also entered the scene in an effort to respond to the growing and various financial needs of the many poor in the areas they operate in.

Today, microfinance programs continue to be the "flavor of the day." Local as well as foreign research or studies on microfinance abound. Many of these papers though have focused mainly on the twin concerns of outreach—the intended beneficiaries and the sustainability of the microfinance institutions (MFIs). For instance, I have had the opportunity to write a case on two different MFIs for the Social and Development Entrepreneurship Program of the Asian Institute of Management. But data gathered were limited to certain performance indicators. Examples include number of group borrowers, number of client-members by type of loan and by gender, average amount of loan per borrower, total amounts disbursed, repayment rate and amount of client savings. Yet, more than the number of MFIs which were established and have sustained their operations, and more than the number of poor people who have been able to avail of microfinance facilities, and the amount of loans granted, we need to know the extent to which microfinance has truly affected the lives of the Filipino poor in terms of increased incomes and improved quality of life.

Impact assessments of microfinance in the Philippine setting have usually been confined to studies conducted by individual MFIs on their respective operations. Any data citing better incomes and quality of life have been gathered and presented through testimonials of select client-members rather than through surveys that could have involved a wider sample of respondent-beneficiaries. During the Microcredit Summit +5 held in November 2002, Anton Simanowitz, program coordinator for Improving the Impact of Microfinance on Poverty Project or Imp-Act which is sponsored by the Ford Foundation, admitted that the industry has established clear best practice for measuring and reporting financial performance; but it has not established comparable standards for performance in poverty outreach and impact.

One and a half decades of implementation, and seven years from its articulation in the national development agenda, it is high-time for the practitioners, networks and the government to measure the overall social impact of microfinance on the lives of the Filipino poor, and its contribution to the original objective of reducing poverty at the national scale. A possible windfall of such an assessment might even be the identification of a microfinance scheme or model that is uniquely and distinctively Filipino.

THEY SAID

Betting on pain

"If you are willing to do something good for the country, you must undergo the pain."
—Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales on the three jueteng whistleblowers who have left the country

Lost era

"The era of low prices is already a thing of the past."
—Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla urging less dependence on imported fuel, in reaction to oil prices' sliding a bit.

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DOJ's premature libel case

EVERY DAY, people testify in court. They are not charged with lying right after they testify. One reason is obvious. The court may believe them. So, where does that leave the claim of lying? Also, the crude effort has a chilling effect on witnesses. It obstructs justice. That is one of the lessons in the Nalundasan case. To test the proposition and uphold the dignity of the Senate, you have to have Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, as well as the supposed "libel" complainants and their handlers, show cause why they should not be cited for contempt.

In the Nalundasan case, on June 10, 1939, the four accused (Ferdinand, Mariano and Pio Marcos, and Quirino Lizardo) filed eight separate complaints with the justice of the peace of Laoag. They charged the prosecution's star witness, Calixto Aguinaldo, with false testimony because of allegedly false declarations by the latter in the preliminary investigation of Dec. 7, 1938, and during the trial of the four accused.

When the complaints were filed, Aguinaldo was on cross-examination in a separate trial against Lizardo. The trial of the other three accused had not yet started.

On motion asking that the four be declared in contempt, they were ordered to show cause why they should not be so punished.

Simultaneously, with the judgment on the main case for murder, the four were adjudged guilty of contempt and sentenced each to pay a fine of P200, with corresponding subsidiary imprisonment in case of insolvency. On appeal, the Supreme Court was "of the opinion that the action of the Marcoses and Lizardo was calculated, or at least tended, directly or indirectly to obstruct the administration of justice and that, therefore, the trial court properly found them guilty of contempt."

This seems to be the intent of Gonzalez, whose fitness to remain in the Cabinet is on the line. The intent to terrorize witnesses is clear. How would it look if the Pasay City prosecutor charges Boy Mayor, and the Senate then says in its report that it believed the latter?

—RAV SAGUISAG,
4045 Bigasan St.,
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Fabella is a compassionate health care facility

THE JOSE Fabella Memorial Hospital will always be the facility providing professional health care with the highest standards despite its limited resources. Our hospital will always be known as the "hospital of women of the masses."

Our Quality Assurance Program Unit (QAPU) has been updating our present systems and workflows to ensure a more efficient and effective delivery of quality health care. All heads of services are always vigilant in monitoring their respective departments and units, and they are also sensitive to the patients' observations regarding our services and personnel. And if there are occasional lapses by some of our employees and health workers (e.g., uncalled for remarks and statements), management has been consistent in its principle of providing quality health care in the most compassionate manner. We will not tolerate unprofessional acts in this facility.

Our medical staff, strengthened by religious values, will always be guided by their Hippocratic oath. Our Constitution upholds the sanctity of life.

We categorically deny carrying out any intervention leading to criminal abortion.

We are guided by standard protocol on health care. The clinical practice guidelines of all departments are enforced. Our training is accredited by the different specialty societies. The heightened interest in medical malpractice has been properly addressed such that we have conducted seminars and lectures on two occasions for this year. The informed consent from patients has been significantly emphasized as one of our standard practices in the initiation of management and intervention.

The management of the Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital will pursue its mission of providing optimum quality maternal and reproductive health care. We intend to extend a compassionate and professional level of care to our patients. We enjoin all major stakeholders, including the media, in helping us ensure our attainment of this mission.

—JEFFREY B. LEONARDO,
M.D., MHA,
officer in charge,
Jose Fabella
Memorial Hospital,
corner Lope de Vega Street,
Sta. Cruz, Manila

IT'S nice to know that Fabella is not tolerating abuses committed by its health workers on its patients. I hope it would really look into the cases mentioned in the article to further improve its services. The INQUIRER sources swear they had all witnessed, not just heard about, the reported instances.

—CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA,
PDI reporter

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Solons make sense on language issue

THIS is a reaction to the article of Alcuin Papa in the June 1 issue of the INQUIRER, more specifically on Education Secretary Florencio Abad's view on the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools.

We are doing a disservice to our young and this country in insisting that Filipino and not English should be used as the medium of education. We can't seem to understand that the only way this country can keep up with the changing world is to adopt the universal language which is, like it or not, English. With call centers sprouting everywhere and the penchant of this administration to export labor all over the world, our country would be wiser to prepare our youth to be competitive in the job market.

While we bicker endlessly about the issue, all other countries (those with common sense) are trying to improve their command of the language. Secretary Abad says that the students will be hard put to learn English because they can't read. It is the other way around, first teach them the language (grammar, phonics, etc.), and then they will be able to read.

The public schools should teach Filipino as a subject as is done in private schools. Students don't need to speak their native language in school, it is already spoken at home.

The House should definitely pass the bill that the majority of our lawmakers have endorsed, which would make English the principal medium of instruction at all levels. Finally our congressmen are making sense!

—MILAGROS KLEIST,
milaclif@info.com.ph

Regrets and explanation for perceived 'brush-off'

I WRITE in connection with the Lifestyle article "Galicano wins top international portrait prize" (PDI, 5/30/05) to clarify the alleged brush-off Romulo Galicano reportedly encountered during his visit to the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C.

At the outset, I would like to offer Galicano my warmest congratulations for bringing great honor to our country by winning the International Portrait Award. In addition, let me thank him for accepting our invitation and joining us in our Filipino-American reception at the embassy to welcome Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo. I have noted that it was actually Consul Hjayceelyn Quintana who invited Galicano to come to the reception, enabling her to have the opportunity of receiving him and introducing him to the secretary.

It is my understanding that, through various parties, a further request for a private visit with Secretary Romulo and me had been made for the following day. Unfortunately, such a request could no longer be considered because the secretary's schedule for the day had already been filled with meetings at the embassy, the State Department, the White House, the US Congress, the US Asean Business Council, the US Institute for Peace, the Office of US Veterans' Affairs, the Heritage Institution and other activities.

If Galicano's request had been received when affairs of state were not a competing priority, it would have been my personal pleasure to host him separately. Perhaps he can grant me this privilege in his next visit to the United States.

In closing, please allow me to respectfully establish that Consul Quintana—by every measure—is a most dedicated and outstanding foreign service officer performing an important function in our post.

I profoundly regret the misunderstanding on this matter.

—ALBERT DEL ROSARIO,
ambassador to the United States,
Embassy of the Philippines,
1600 Massachusetts Ave.
NW Washington, D.C., USA

Didn't say new CIIF boss should be given a chance

I WOULD like to call attention to the report "Coronacion appointment questioned but 2 senators say: Give him a chance," under the byline of TJ Burgonio. (PDI, 5/14/05)

The headline was erroneous and deceptive because only one senator was quoted as having said that newly appointed Coconut Industry Investment Fund chief Danilo Coronacion should be given a chance.

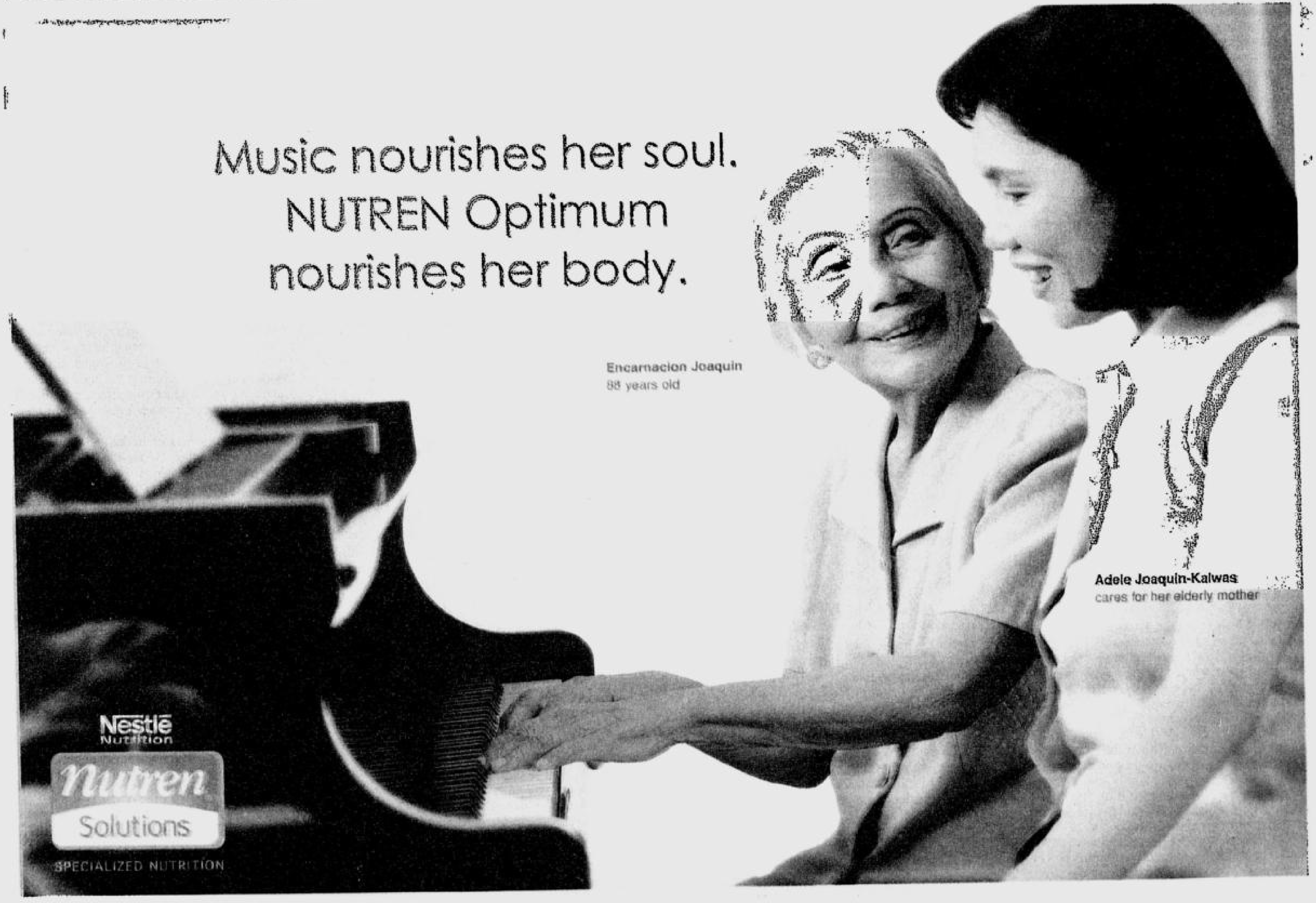
As chair of the Senate committee on agriculture and food, I was cited in the article as having initiated an inquiry into the use of the coco levy funds. Therefore, it would have been reckless and biased on my part if I had issued such statement, well aware that Coronacion is signatory to the proposed P8.4-billion Agusan coco project, the main focus of my committee's inquiry.

I do hope you will set the record straight and correct this error of fact.

—SEN. RAMON
B. MAGSAYSAY JR.,
Rm. 507, GSIS Bldg.,
Financial Center,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

I AGREE with Senator Magsaysay that the head was erroneous. It was clear in my story that only Sen. Aquilino Pimentel suggested that Coronacion be given a chance to prove his worth. Senator Magsaysay was mentioned, only in passing, as one of two senators who had sought an inquiry into the use of coco levy funds.

—TJ BURGONIO,
PDI reporter



Adele and her mother are both musicians. Adele plays the flute while her mom, Encarnacion, who's almost in her 90's, can still play the piano. Given her mom's age, Adele knows that good nutrition is even more important for her strength.

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[1] [illegible] [2] [illegible] Cancer Res 1994;54(5):1969-1975.

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Over P1B in Benefits Paid

Philamlife, the country's No. 1 life insurance company, earlier disclosed that total payments to Philamlife scholars from 2000-2005 will reach P1.019 Billion when this year's first batch of education benefits is released to policyholders this May. A total of P165 Million in Philamlife education benefits is currently being released through its network of 100 branch offices nationwide.

Timely Release of Benefits

Philamlife education benefits are intended for the tuition and other enrollment expenses of the scholars covered by Philamlife's various education insurance products, mainly Scholar Gold Prime and Advantage and other Scholar Gold products. The timely release of these benefits will allow parents to enroll their children for school year 2005-06.

Excellent Management of Funds

Philamlife only sells "fixed-value" education products. These products peg the promised payment to a specific pre-computed amount, and are thus more viable and easily managed. With fixed-value plans, a company knows exactly how much its obligations will be at a certain point in time, and can thus manage its trust funds more effectively.

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Aides thwart attack on Padaca home

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ILAGAN, Isabela—Security aides of Gov. Maria Gracia Padaca thwarted an attempt to riddle with bullets the governor's house at the provincial capitol compound here on Sunday morning.

Padaca said her aides heard three gunshots and saw red laser pointers aimed at the governor's compound past 12 a.m. of Sunday.

They saw at least three men positioned about 200 meters from her official residence and guesthouse, she said.

The aides fired at the men but it was not clear if any of them was hit. Police said the aides did not find any gunman.

Padaca said the incident could be a move to scare her due to her recent statements against "jueteng" operations in the province.

She said she was writing a speech in her room when she heard the gunshots.

"I was quite worried then because it was very near, about 200 meters away, so my security men immediately responded," she said.

Padaca said she called up Senior Supt. Percival Barba, Isabela police director, to report the incident, but his mobile phone was turned off. She later called up Isabela Rep. Edwin Uy, who, in turn, asked the Ilagan police to check the incident.

Padaca's security escorts said they saw men at a hut near the Capitol before they heard the gunshots.

Supt. Romeo Uy, Ilagan police chief, said they were still investigating the incident.

He said the gunshots could have come from a resident of the nearby California Homes subdivision. He said he had sent a team to the subdivision to interview residents.

"The security men of Governor Padaca overreacted. We are tracing who fired the gun near the governor's house," he said.

But Padaca dismissed Uy's statement. "That is Colonel Uy's version, but my security men will tell you the real picture."

Rare wild flower flourishes in Cagayan Valley

CABAGAN, Isabela—Environmentalists have found a rare wild flower called the Rafflesia in the eastern forest of the Sierra Madre's biodiversity corridor in Cagayan.

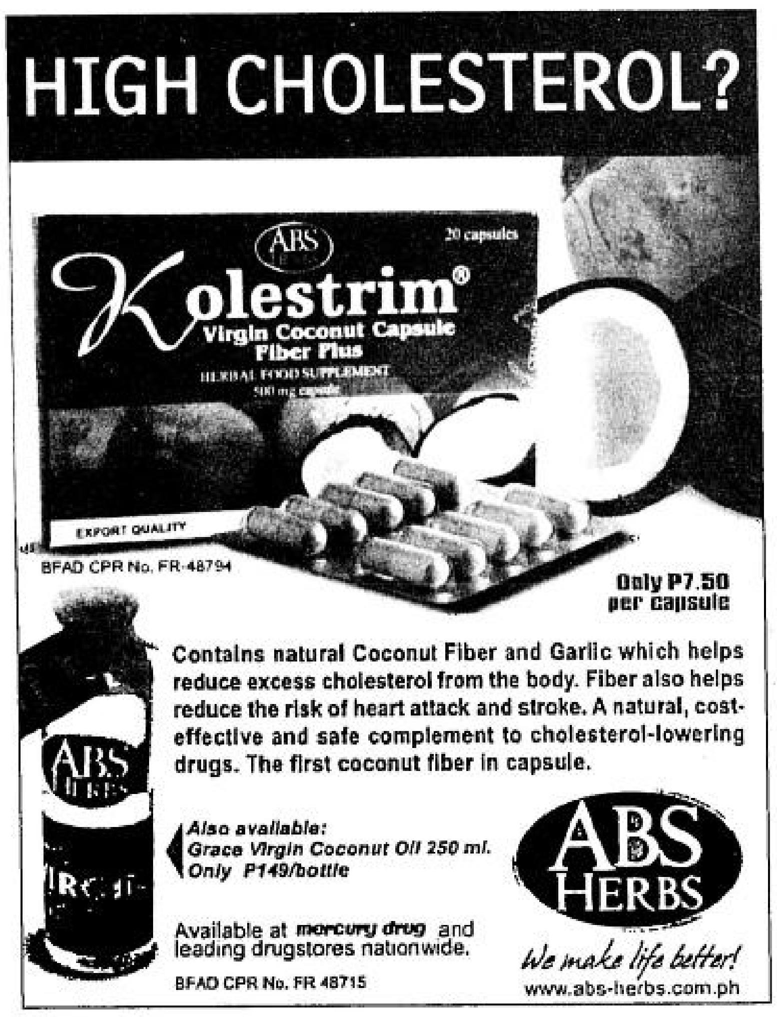
Perla Visorro, chief executive officer of the environment group Cagayan Valley Partners for People's Development, said her field workers found the Rafflesia when they went to the Sierra Madre recently.

She expressed hope that the discovery would encourage President Macapagal-Arroyo to declare the biodiversity corridor in Cagayan a protected landscape and seascape.

Visorro said a documentary report had already been sent to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the provincial government and the town mayors, hoping to gain their support in protecting the corridor, which hosts a variety of wild plants, flowers and animals.

The Rafflesia grows as big as a car wheel or as small as a full-grown cabbage. Although classified as rare because it grows only in small numbers, the Rafflesia is not endangered or vulnerable but at risk, Visorro said.

Only 20 species of Rafflesia have been found in Southeast Asia. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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Albay electric co-op hikes power rate by 73¢

By Jed Ll. Bacason
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—The Albay Electric Cooperative (Aleco), which supplies power in the province, has increased its charges rate for residential, commercial and industrial consumers by 72.7 centavos per kilowatt-hour from P6.4698 per kWh.

The increase takes effect this month. The last increase of Aleco, which was P1.2318 per kWh, was in November last year.

Basic charges

In a press conference on Wednesday, Jose Misael Moraleda, Aleco project supervisor, said the increase was in accordance with the National Power Corp.'s (Napocor) increase in basic charges and adjustments, as reflected in its bill to Aleco from April 26 to May 25.

Moraleda said the power rate increase reflected Napocor's increases in the average generation rate charge, generation rate adjustment mechanism (GRAM) and the addition of the third inclement currency exchange rate adjustment (Icera).

He said Napocor's rate increases were approved by the Energy Regulation Commission as early as April, but Aleco was notified about them only last week.

"It was only on Saturday last week when we received the power bill from Napocor that we realized the increase of its charges," he said.

Aleco also increased its monthly systems loss charge by 10.76 centavos, from 80.45 centavos to 91.21 starting June.

Moraleda said Aleco's systems loss charge was not passed on to the consumers as every electric cooperative in the country has been granted 14-percent systems loss cap.

"Beyond the 14-percent systems loss cap, it is actually the organization that absorbs these losses, not the consumers," Moraleda said.

"This time, there is an increase because of the volume and the cost of purchased power from Napocor," he said.

On May 25, Aleco paid Napocor some P92 million for about 24 million kWh utilized from March 26 to April 25.

On June 25, Aleco will pay Napocor P115.7 million for 26 million kWh used from April 26 to May 25.

Moraleda said power rates were being increased only to keep up with Napocor's rate increase.

No portion of the amount from the increase will go to the cooperative, he said.

Impending increase

Moraleda warned member-consumers that the power rate had yet to increase next month when the implementation of the value-added tax (VAT) takes effect.

"Starting July 1, when VAT takes effect, we will again increase the power rate by 10 percent of the existing rate.

That will be another 72-centavo increase," Moraleda warned.

He said the rate might again increase by 12 percent next year if the economic state of the country would not improve.

Moraleda pointed out that although Aleco would increase its rate to P7.1968 per kWh starting June, the electric cooperative was still charging the second lowest amount in the region.

The lowest rate is being charged by the Camarines Sur Electric Cooperative II, with P6.8672 per kWh, and the highest is the Sorsogon Electric Cooperative II, with P9.8385 per kWh.

Aleco owes Napocor P497.8 million and the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) P33.7 million.

The cooperative also has about P70 million to P80 million to be collected from delinquent consumers with two to three months of unpaid electric bills.

"Aleco only survives because Napocor has not yet cut off their support to us despite our large debt to it," Moraleda said.

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Rains hike water level

CITY OF MALOLOS—Farmers can start planting rice and other crops after the water level in the Angat Dam continues to rise because of rains. As of Friday, the dam's water elevation had reached 168.51 meters compared to Monday's 167.72 m. The level started to rise on Sunday at 167.46 m from the lowest level recorded this year at 167.31 on Saturday. Farmers were happy about this development despite an earlier announcement of the National Water Resources Board that it would stop releasing water to farmlands because the dam had reached a critical water level of 180 meters. The board said it would only supply water for Metro Manila residents, and not for irrigation of ricelands.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

2 killed in accident

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two students died and 18 others were seriously injured when the jeep they were riding in fell into a 15-meter ravine just before dusk on Monday. Supt. Rustico Bascugin, public information office chief of the Calabarzon police, identified the victims as Janette Maranan, 16, a senior student at the San Vicente National High School, and John Castillo, 8, a Grade 2 pupil at the Manalupang Elementary School. Bascugin said as the jeep was traversing a feeder road in Barangay San Pablo, driver Julian Castillo alighted from the vehicle to check on his goats. A few minutes later, Castillo said he saw the jeep descending fast into the gorge.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

4 die in mishap

COTABATO CITY—A speeding jeep plunged off a 20-foot cliff in President Roxas, North Cotabato, killing four of its passengers and inflicting injuries to six others on Tuesday. SPO1 Jessie Rasco, President Roxas traffic investigator, said most of the victims belonged to the Forteza clan of Mlang, North Cotabato. Rasco said the vehicle's brakes malfunctioned, causing the jeep to turn turtle before it fell into the cliff. The fatalities were pinned to death, most of them with serious head injuries, hospital authorities said. Those in critical condition were immediately rushed to hospitals in Davao City. Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said the road where the jeep fell had a sharp curve without traffic signs or railings.

Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Safety measures

LUCENA CITY—The Quezon Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council urged the local government of Real, Infanta and General Nakar to prepare their respective disaster preparedness plans to avert the repeat of the tragic flash floods and landslides that killed close to a thousand people last year. Dr. Henry Buzar, Quezon-PDCC official, said they have already ordered the local governments to undertake all safety measures such as the setting up of early warning device, advance information system and evacuation centers in calamity-prone areas. Buzar also put to task village officials near rivers to immediately inform the community on every irregular rise of the river.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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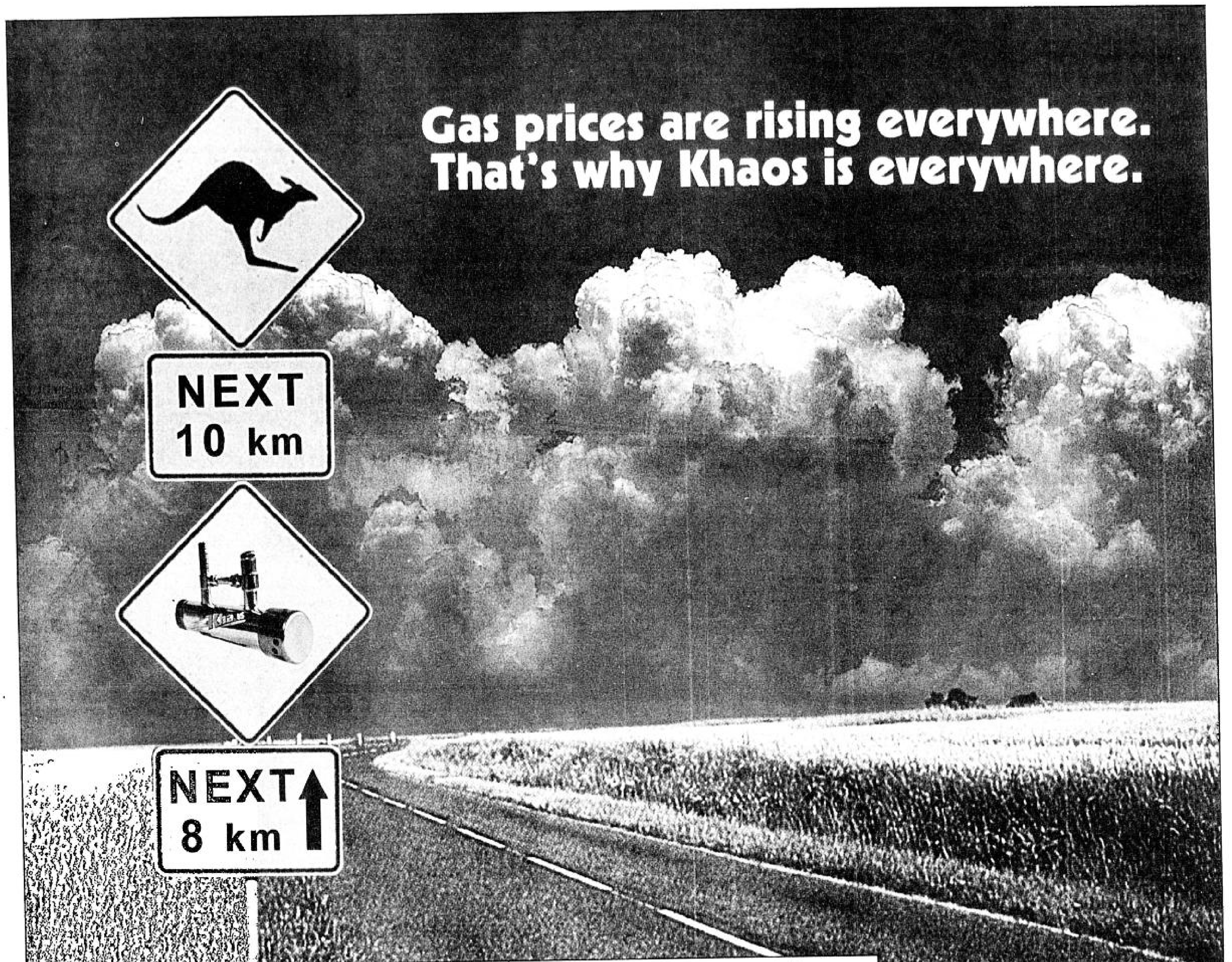
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Expo Commercial
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Doventro' Ent.
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near Shell Gas Station
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Baguio group rallies to 'liberate' environment

BAGUIO CITY—Shirtless men marched with the Philippine flag around a mall here on Saturday to promote the "liberation" of the Philippine environment.

Members of the group called the Otyztyk celebrated Independence Day by introducing a new form of activism devoted to political environmentalism, said Lester Lebumfacil, 31, an artist.

Residents found the activity amusing. "They are like clowns. We usually don't find ralliers funny, but they are like clowns," said Rafael, 45, a doctor, as the group taunted motorists.

Lebumfacil caught the motorists' attention by hurling himself in the middle of traffic, virtually naked except for earth-toned paint covering his body and an underwear.

The group proceeded to perform skits that conveyed images of illegal logging, air pollution and irresponsible mining.

While tied to a masked vigilante played by Sacha Salenga, a student, Abner Enriquez, who sells trinkets on the streets, swung a paper hatchet at a pine tree near the SM City Baguio mall.

Claire Waytan, a language teacher, pushed a baby carriage that had the sign, "Save Mama Earth."

The group's general sentiments were summed up in their only placard: "Government sucks, can't stop pollution."

Lebumfacil said clowning was the best kind of activism if militants wanted to pursue an issue that was the substance of all motherhood statements, but the last priority in any real government undertaking.

Lebumfacil earned his spurs marching in Metro Manila among activists who always found a thing or two about the government to complain about.

He said the hard lesson he learned through the years was that the public no longer appreciated activism.

"Many times, I encounter people who swear we are wasting our time marching on the streets. 'Why do you need to create traffic jams,' someone would always complain," Lebumfacil said.

"That always irritated me. So now, I have decided to forget how we used to rally, and what we always rallied for, and to focus on the environment because it is more important [than all the politicians we want to kick out of the government]," he said.

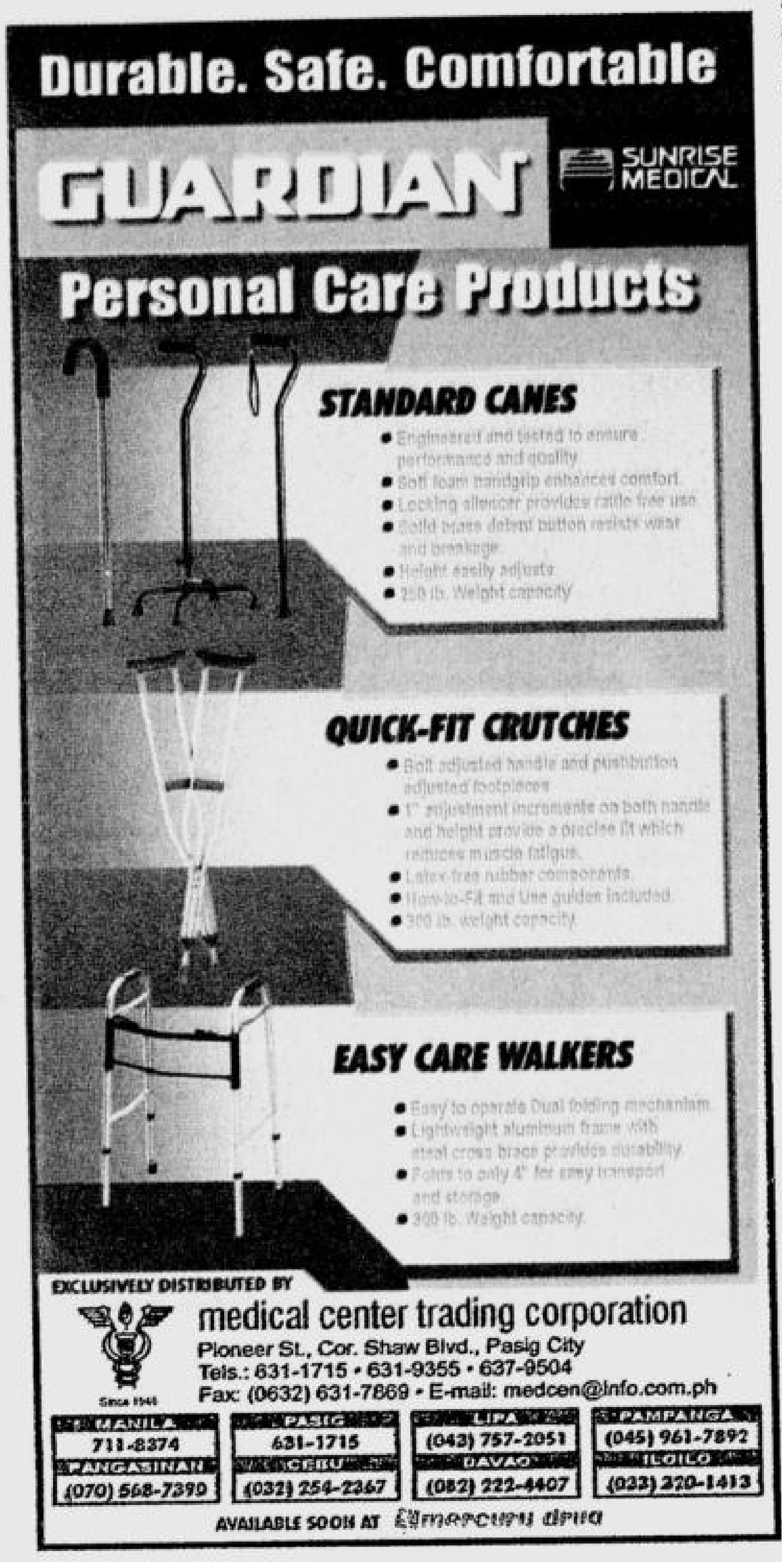
Lebumfacil said many people were angry at how the government ran the country because they always saw the results from the condition of the environment.

This was why his group has become a mix of grassroots sectors in the city.

Otyztyk's environmental platform has attracted even migrants from Lucena City selling street merchandises, like Wency Rea; a high school student named Grace; Jun Tam, brother of an aspiring actor; and Rocky Marco, son of a Cagayan mayor.

The group adopted the name of Lebumfacil's curio shop on Session Road.

For the moment, Otyztyk has been providing comedic support to another environmental program, a marathon project called the "Takbo Para sa Kalikasan (Run for the Environment)." *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*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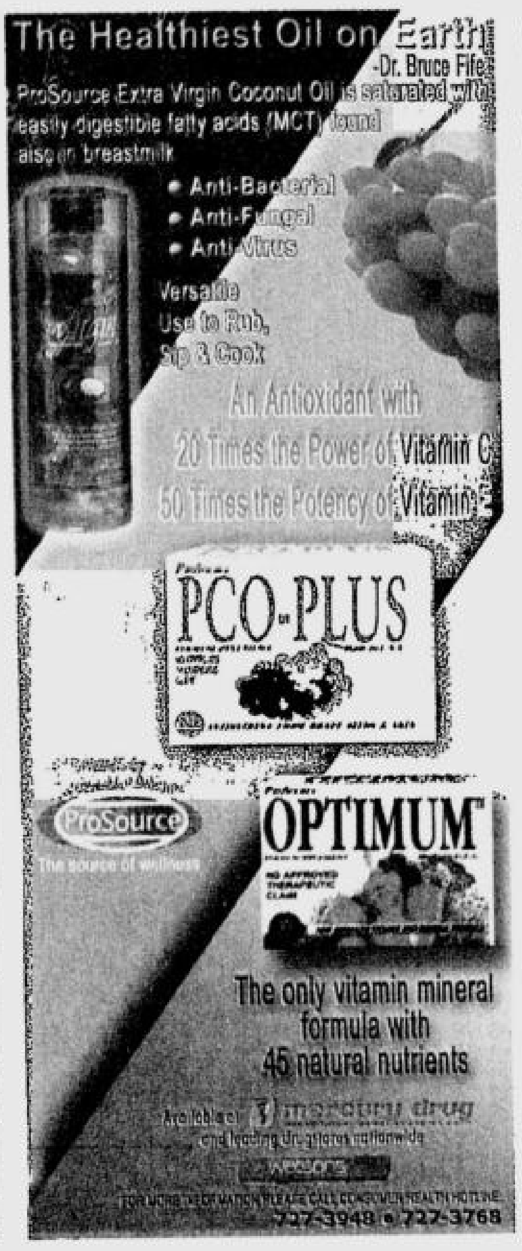
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Calabarzon, Mindanao workers say wage increases mere alms

WORKERS in Calabarzon and Mindanao are assailing the wage increases granted them by regional wage boards.

Two big labor groups in Southern Tagalog said the P22 raise in daily minimum wage granted in the region was mere alms that insulted the dignity of workers.

"This is how low the Arroyo administration regards the Filipino workers. It squeezes them [by imposing] more taxes and leaves them to subsist [in] starvation wages," Ronnie Luna, chair of the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino-Calabarzon, said in a statement.

Luna said the amount was way below the "living wage" needed by workers to cope with the rising cost of living.

The cost of living in Calabarzon is P663 a day, according to the National Wages and Productivity Commission.

"The wage hike ... does not heed the miserable conditions of workers and the people," Luz Baculo, secretary general of the Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan-Kilusang Mayo Uno (Pamatik-KMU), told the INQUIRER.

Last week, the Department of Labor and Employment announced that workers would receive a P10 increase in daily basic pay effective June 16.

The increase was approved by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board.

On Jan. 1, 2006, another round of increases will be given to minimum wage earners in the following areas: Extended Metropolitan Area, P12 a day; Growth Corridor Area, P7; Emerging Growth Area, P5; and Resource Based Area, P3.

Low peso value

But Luna noted that the purchasing power of the peso in March, based on prices in 2000 prices, was only 79 centavos.

"Meaning, the real value of the P300 minimum wage is only P237," he said.

"Also, these minimal wage increases would be rendered useless with the advent of the VAT [value-added tax] in July, whose expanded coverage would lead to dramatic increases in the prices of power, water, petroleum products and transport fares," Luna said.

The labor leader warned that the issuance of wage orders would not deter them from pursuing the fight for a legislated wage increase.

Baculo said the P10 wage increase effective June 16 had no serious objective but to pour cold water over the workers' struggle for a P125 legislated wage increase.

The last wage order in the region, issued on Nov. 1, 2004, simply reclassified wages in different municipalities and provinces in Calabarzon, she said.

"Instead of an increase, workers suffered wage diminutions from P5 to P38 in the reclassifications. Now, in the increase announced last Friday, wages are just the level or not even enough with the minimum wage before Nov. 1," she explained.

Northern Mindanao's wage board granted a P16 wage increase to private sector workers but moderate and militant labor groups are raising a howl over it.

Under Wage Order No. 11, non-agriculture industry workers in the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan and in the towns of Tagoloan, Villanueva and Jasaan in Misamis Oriental will receive P218 in daily minimum wage while in other cities and towns, the daily minimum wage has been pegged at P211.

Those in the agricultural sector in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan will receive P208 in minimum wage per day while those in other cities and towns are entitled to a P201 daily minimum wage.

Not enough

The Associated Labor Union-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) and the Kilusang Mayo Uno said the increase was not even enough to cover the workers' cost of transportation.

Ryan Guerrero, KMU regional spokesperson, said it was a pro-management decision made by the RTWPB.

According to labor groups, the daily cost of living in the region is P495.

"The board does not care about the welfare of the workers who are the hardest hit in the series of oil price increases in the country," Nick Borja, regional operations director of ALU-TUCP, told the INQUIRER.

In Cotabato City, talks between labor and management over proposed wage increases in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao hit a snag because of disagreements on the actual figure to be granted.

Emmanuel Alano, ARMM labor secretary, said the labor sector was insisting on a P15 increase but employers wanted only P10.

He said the workers were willing to accept the P10 proposal provided that the cost of living allowance would also be increased by P10. The management sector rejected the rider.

Alano said companies had cautioned the board against granting an increase in excess of P10 because "it would allegedly mean possible [retrenchment] of workers."

The South Cotabato-based pineapple giant Dole Philippines (Dolefil) has urged the government to defer any wage increase in Central Mindanao.

Recently, the RTWPB-12 approved a P16 increase for workers.

Lawyer Mel Hernandez, Dole's human resource director, said the implementation of the new wage rate might force the company to lay off workers.

Dolefil, one of the country's biggest dollar earners, has over 5,000 workers. It produces bananas and other tropical fruits, mainly for export. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Grace Cantal-Albasin and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Baguio takes new tourism tack with safety and disaster experts

BAGUIO CITY—The summer capital has taken a new tack at drawing tourists by showcasing an emergency response and safety exposition on Saturday to prove it is safe to travel there.

Vicente Tomazar, Cordillera director of the Office of Civil Defense, said showing off the approval ratings from disaster management experts about road safety in Baguio and the Cordillera could increase tourism activities better than the routine advertising campaigns.

Tourism continues to slide and the local tourism office blames a bout with a fatal disease outbreak in December 2004 and in January.

Hotel bookings dropped by half during the summer break this year, which is the city's peak season, according to the Baguio Tourism Office.

Mayor Braulio Yaranon said high toll fees at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) and the failing economy could be the bigger culprits behind the decline in tourist arrivals.

Tomazar introduced the tourism-attracting potentials of disaster management to Sen. Richard Gordon, former tourism secretary, in April, partly to offer Baguio's tourism campaign a unique set of endorsers.

He said the project intended to promote the rescue capabilities of the local government, the communities and the city's premier industries to assure tourists that help is not far away.

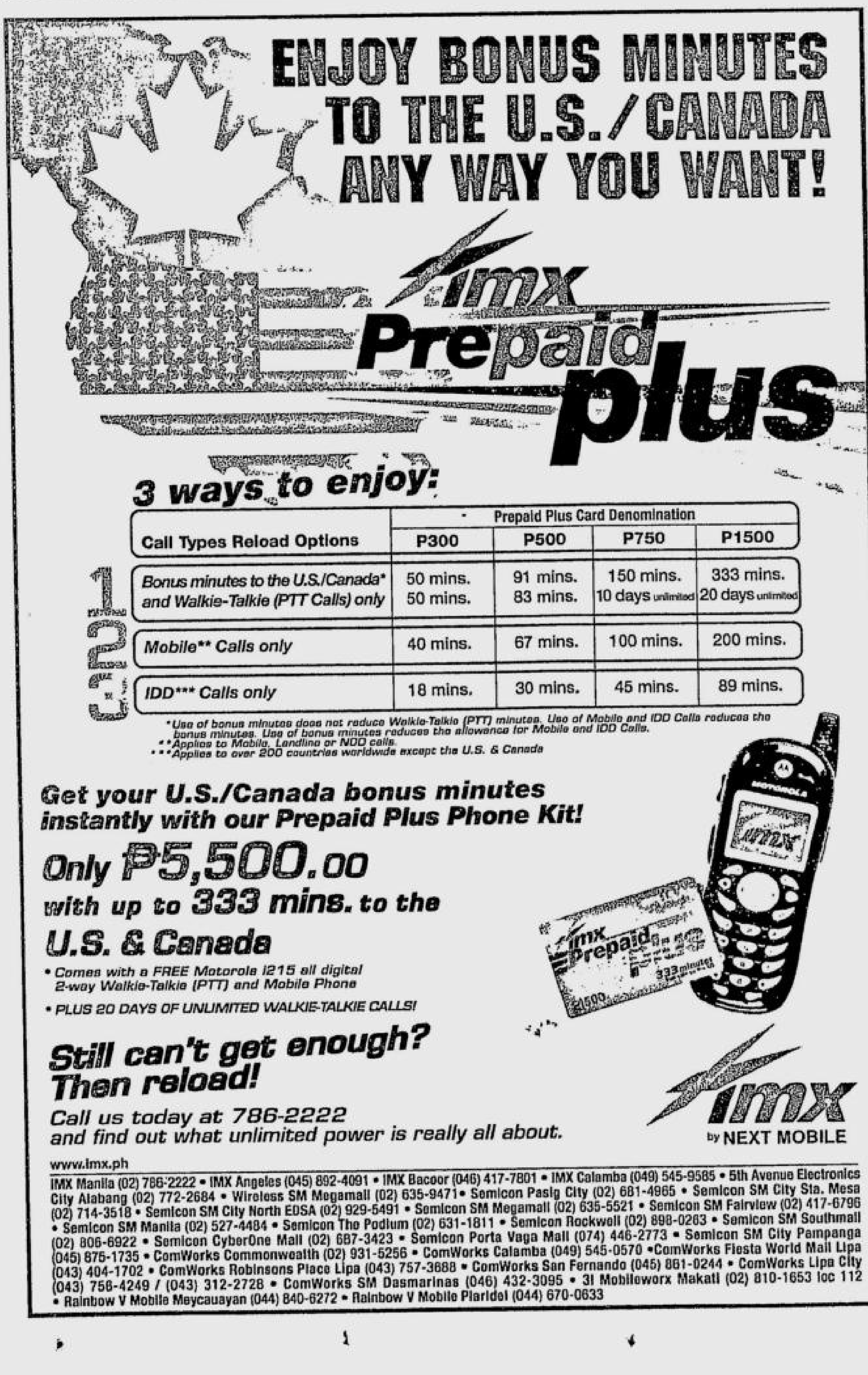
But the exposition became integral to Baguio's tourism campaign because of two major accidents in the May—a Dagupan City-bound bus crash that killed 29 people and a plane crash near the Loakan Airport that killed four Air Force officers.

Tomazar said the publicity surrounding the accidents made it important for the OCD to encourage travel to the city.

The exposition's slogan pursues this agenda: "Safe tayo, Biyahe na (We're safe, go ahead and travel)." The exposition ran until yesterday.

It was highlighted by rescue simulations conducted by the Baguio Country Club and the Texas Instruments Philippines Inc.

Tomazar said Baguio's contribution was its community rescue teams, particularly a brigade of women volunteers at Aurora Hill, who are tapped during typhoons and earthquakes because they are this district's frontline defense against disasters. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*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PMA chief sees 'Day of Int'l Embarrassment'

From page A1

gambling and wiretapping controversies that sparked protest actions in many areas yesterday.

"While we celebrate, certain sectors of our society are staging protests because they want a change in government. Last night, someone offered to take the place of President Macapagal-Arroyo," Balaoing said in a speech during the city's Independence Day program.

"When other countries celebrate their independence, their people are united. They show the world they are proud to be a people. Compare those countries with ours today," he said.

"It is sad to note that we Filipinos are divided and disunited and are capable only of pushing our selfish agenda."

But he said the military was not willing to become a party to new destabilization efforts. Relaying a message sent by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu, Balaoing said the military was committed to uphold the Constitution.

"That said, the military still courts the public's trust, support and unity because it is in cooperation that we can fulfill our goal for national freedom," he quoted Abu as saying.

Balaoing also urged the public to support the government, saying that not even the President could reform the country alone.

Political immaturity

He said the country's political immaturity was unfortunate because the Republic was the first to obtain independence in Asia.

The country declared its independence in 1898, while Indonesia obtained its independence only in 1945, South Korea in 1948, Malaysia in 1957 and Singapore in 1965.

Balaoing said the late President Manuel Roxas' speech in 1946 seemed prophetic: "If we invite poverty and chaos and disorder to inhabit our land, we will break faith in our noble path and imperil our national future."

"Isn't this happening already to the Philippines? The future of our sons and future grandsons is imperiled ... But we can make a difference. Let us join the national call to reduce prejudice, poverty, injustice and other cruelties that our people suffer," Balaoing said.

In Pampanga, reports of coup plots and scandals over "jueteng" payoffs and Ms Arroyo's alleged wiretapped conversations failed to dampen the observance of the 107th anniversary of the declaration of Philippine independence.

San Fernando rites

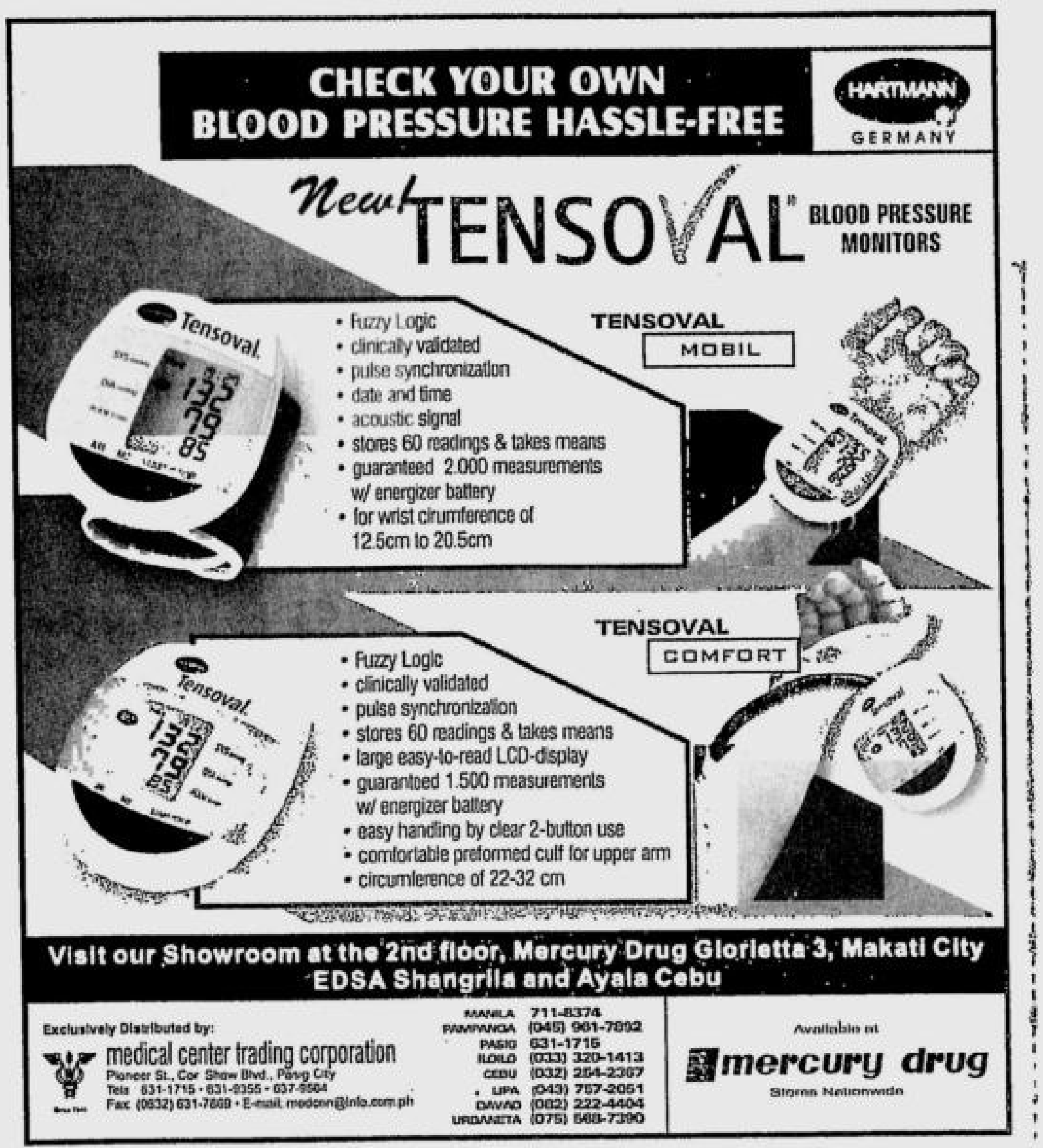
The rites in the City of San Fernando became an occasion for a commitment to freedom.

"The controversies and destabilization efforts are not really between President Macapagal-Arroyo and the opposition. It is more about the need for us to preserve the gains many Filipinos have worked hard for, despite the risks to their lives, in the name of freedom," said Mayor Oscar Rodriguez.

Heirs of local heroes and heroines joined the Independence Day program attended by government employees and local residents.

Rodriguez said local governments should not allow the scandals and threats hounding the national government to affect their governance, especially in the rural areas.

"Destabilization works have been going on for quite a while and are heightened only now. These are no cause for us in the local governments to be distracted from our work," he said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*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3 'nations' at war on Independence Day

From page A1

to the edge by inflaming the passions of citizens on the basis of grievances and allegations by calling for mob action rather than allowing legal processes to resolve conflict.

The country has entered another incendiary period of its turbulent post-independence history, punctuated by a long-standing communist insurgency and by 24 years of dictatorship under Ferdinand Marcos.

More volatile

The current crisis has become more volatile and explosive as groups pressing for the resignation of President MAcapagal-Arroyo and calling for mob action in the streets escalate their demands, without giving us an indication of where all these calls will lead the nation to. These groups likewise have not made it clear if a more credible national leadership will replace the one they seek to topple.

Further escalation of tensions are likely to make the crisis unmanageable and ignite street violence, giving the military an excuse to intervene—either to grab power for itself or by withdrawing support from the regime. The latter action is likely to spark a civil war between military units which are now divided by the crisis.

One can't assume the government will not call in the troops to defend itself and the state. We can't rule out a declaration of national emergency and martial law if (God forbid) this event happens—a consequence most Filipinos do not want.

This is how volatile the crisis is escalating to a flash point. If we provoke things beyond breaking point, we may not be lucky in avoiding bloodshed as we were in 1986 and 2001.

Right to know

Surely, citizens have a right to know what lies in store for them in case of a regime collapse, and what price they are going to pay for manning the barricades and storming the battlements of an allegedly corrupt regime which is accused of allegedly rigging the last presidential election.

Are the citizens not entitled to know before they stampede to the streets as a howling mob whether they would be ruled by a military junta or a government whose system of law is based on informers, squealers and whistle-blowers.

Two manifestations of mob rule—Edsa I and Edsa II—offer sobering lessons of the failure of mob rule to bring about responsible, competent and honest government. These lessons ought to warn our people against the recklessness of actions that would dismantle the rules of a constitutional system and underline the importance of channeling grievances into legal but imperfect processes and allowing to make them work to resolve conflict and political and social grievances.

Barrage of revelations

The current crisis was brought to a head by a barrage of revelations by self-appointed squealers on alleged wrongdoing by the President's family and relatives.

There was a revelation by a witness with a dubious background, who handed "jueteng" payoffs allegedly to Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, the President's son, and Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, her brother-in-law.

There was also a revelation by a former deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation that he had audio tapes which purportedly contains evidence (the so-called smoking gun) of "massive" election rigging by the President. According to squealer Samuel Ong, the contents of the tapes are so shocking that they forced him to reveal them in public.

These triggered demands by regime opponents for the resignation of President Arroyo, as well as calls for another people power demonstration that is expected to bring military intervention.

A few issues at hand are raised by these revelations. First, can they be the basis of extra-legal and extra-constitutional political action to cut short an elected term of a president?

Disturbing implication

A disturbing implication of the reliance on hearsay by witnesses is that in the zeal of some impatient groups to bring about leadership change and curb corruption (without doubt is a social evil), we are now having a reign of informers revealing unverified hearsay and gossip.

Their testimonies provide the basis for inciting to mob rule, abetted by some overzealous Catholic bishops who have gone beyond homilies in the pulpit to engage in political action, like the mullahs of theocratic states who can't distinguish the separation between the Church and the State.

The irony in a democratic state of giving supremacy to hearsay over evidence-based rule of law is that we have become a nation of whistle-blowers and informers who are spying on one another for scandals and whose hearsay revelations are being pushed to replace the rule of law in a constitutional system which is the cornerstone of political stability and order.

Totalitarian states have depended on regime maintenance on networks of paid state informers (good examples are the Nazi Gestapo, the Soviet KGB) to spy on citizens. In this country, regime opponents build their campaign for good government on a network of informers and squealers to feed the scandal mills with fodder of hearsay, who are claimed by their sponsors as motivated by patriotic reasons and extolled as models of civic-spirited citizens.

Sammy Ong and Sandra Cam obviously belong to this exalted category of citizens, making whistle-blowing a major cottage industry and a test of patriotism and civic duty. The more we have of their kind, it is proposed the prospects of having an honest government might be improved. They represent the norms upon which a successor government might seek to build its concept of rule of law.

Missing the point

It should not be understood that we should condone corruption and election cheating. That is missing the point. The transcendental issue in this crisis is that rules and due process which exist to provide the framework within conflict is resolved cannot be discarded by the rules built on the informers with axes to grind.

The pattern of events in the past few weeks shows that regime opponents have deliberately built up a crisis scenario and that they have been waiting for the "right time" to provoke a crisis.

The revelations of Ong and Cam seem to have served to provide the spark to ignite a plan to launch a mass uprising that would trigger military intervention. The consequences of this political agenda might not give us enough time to regret our recklessness.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Joint sale of ownership interest in Philippine National Bank

PNB

The Joint Technical Committee (the "Committee"), duly constituted by the Republic of the Philippines ("ROP"), through the Department of Finance ("DOF"), and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation ("PDIC"), announces that the ROP, PDIC, and Lucio Tan Group shall jointly sell a 67% ownership interest in Philippine National Bank ("PNB" or the "Bank") (the "Transaction"), in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Sale Agreement dated 1 August 2002 and other related agreements.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

Interested parties in good standing with regulatory agencies, committed to, and with sufficient financial capability to further develop and enhance the Bank are invited to submit to ING Bank N.V., the exclusive financial advisor to the Committee, a request to pre-qualify together with the following:

(1) full name of the interested party, address, telephone and telefax number of principal contact;
(2) business overview;
(3) list and nationality of shareholders and their respective shareholdings; in the case of corporate shareholders, the principal shareholders thereof and their respective nationalities;
(4) evidence of financial capacity to pursue the Transaction (e.g. audited financial statements or equivalent);
(5) Duly executed confidentiality agreement (form may be obtained from ING Bank N.V.);
(6) if the interested party is a consortium, all the information and documents enumerated above in respect of each member of the consortium, and the consortium shareholding structure.

All documents must be duly certified/signed by an authorized representative of the interested party. All pre-qualification requirements must be submitted to ING Bank N.V: no later than 5:00 p.m. Manila time on 1 July 2005 at any of the following addresses:

The Philippines
21st Floor, Ayala Tower I
Ayala Avenue
Makati City
Philippines
Attention: Juan Carlos Syquia
Phone: (632) 840 8887

Hong Kong
39th Floor, One International Finance Center
1 Harbour View Street,
Central
Hong Kong
Attention: Gopal T. Menon
Phone: (852) 2913 8639

Interested parties should direct all clarifications to ING Bank N.V. – Corporate Finance during regular office hours at the above contact details.

Pre-qualified interested parties will be informed shortly thereafter and will be provided with a Bidding Package, which includes the bidding rules and an information memorandum on PNB. The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party without offering any reason whatsoever.

Only pre-qualified interested parties shall be allowed to further participate in the bidding. Bids shall be submitted to the Bidding and Negotiating Committee at Long Gallery, 3rd Flr, PNB Financial Center, Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Avenue, Pasay City from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on 12 August 2005 or at such date, time and place as may be subsequently announced by the Committee.

The Bidding and Negotiating Committee has the right to accept or reject any bid.

In the event of a failed bid, the Bidding and Negotiating Committee shall negotiate directly with the highest qualified bidder.

The bidding process shall be governed by applicable Philippine laws, rules and regulations.

The Committee and the Bidding and Negotiating Committee do not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify any party for any expense or loss that may be incurred as a result of participating in the Transaction.

Finally, the Committee and the Bidding and Negotiating Committee reserve the right to terminate the Transaction or modify, supplement or change the rules and conduct of bidding and any other aspects of the Transaction at any time. Interested parties will be notified subsequently of any modification, supplement or change.

JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

A CALL FOR PUBLIC SOBRIETY AND POLITICAL ORDER

We, the members of the business community are calling on the political leaders and the public to act in sobriety and vigilance in consideration of the national interest of the country.

The recent political scandal being linked to the current administration has indeed gotten out of hand and has raised serious concerns on the country's economy, political environment and social situation, besetting the future of our Democracy.

What is at stake at the moment is the national security of our country, which is being threatened by the actions of some people who might be deliberately taking advantage of the situation and which may open the door for military adventurism.

We call on the members of Congress to objectively expedite the ongoing investigations on the Jueteng issue and define a clear timeframe for its conclusion in the process of obtaining the truth for the benefit of the Filipino people.

We call on the government and the enforcement agencies to exercise transparency and commitment to the rule of law in administering sanctions and legal proceedings against individuals who have violated the ideals of the Constitution and hold them accountable for their illegal activities regardless of their stature in the society and government.

The issue at the moment is not the future of any political leader but the future of this NATION.

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MUTYA WINNERS RYAN LIM
Mutya ng Pilipinas 2005 Carmiezinas Nicolosi (center) is flanked by other winners in Saturday night's crowning ceremonies at the Philippine Tourism Tent in Intramuros. From left are 4th runner-up Namkeen Hameed, 2nd runner-up Arabella Hanesh, 1st runner-up Katharina Koegel and 3rd runner-up Abigail Cruz. *(See story on Page A2.)*

₱30-M damage suit vs Letran reversed

THE COURT of Appeals has reversed a ruling of the Caloocan Regional Trial Court that awarded P30 million to Eugene and Angelita Go, parents of a student who was dismissed from the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in 2002 for allegedly being a member of a fraternity.

In its ruling dated May 27, 2005, the 15th Division of the appeals court said it found "no cogent reason to validly sustain the award of damages" to the Gos as the court ruled that their son was not unjustly dismissed from Letran.

On Aug. 18, 2003, the Caloocan RTC Branch 131 awarded the Gos P30 million in damages after their son, who was then a fourth year student at the Letran High School Department, was dismissed from the school.

They complained that their son was not given due process and that their side was not heard by school officials.

However, the appellate court ruled against their claims.

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Museum says it will allow building in park

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL Museum will allow the Manila government to construct a two-story building in the disputed Arroceros Forest Park, a museum official said.

Cecilio Salcedo, acting director of the National Museum, said the city government would be given the go-signal to proceed after the museum finishes an archaeological survey of the building site.

"They can proceed with the project, we just do not want artifacts to be damaged," Salcedo told the INQUIRER.

He said city officials had agreed to stop all diggings to give way to archaeologists who would be working in the area.

Salcedo, along with other museum officials, met last week with Melchor Monsod and Ma. Luisa Quiñones, city legal officer and Division of City Schools superintendent, respectively.

"We will first assess the situation in the area and conduct test diggings to see if we could find archaeological materials there," Salcedo said, adding that the site will be placed under the strict monitoring of the Kapisanan ng mga Archaeologist ng Pilipinas.

The official, who said the archaeological survey could take two weeks, also disclosed that National Museum officials suggested that a place or room in the teachers' building be used to display artifacts that might be unearthed at the site.

Monsod, meanwhile, said that the meeting with the museum officials was "very enlightening."

"It was an opportunity for us to exchange ideas," he said.

"We told them about our project and there was no opposition on their part. In the same manner, we also respect their position and will abide by their rules. I think what is important is that we were not told to stop (the project)," Monsod said.

Environmentalists, particularly Winner Foundation, the group taking care of the 2.1-hectare property, have been opposing the construction of the building inside the park.

According to them, the move would result in the destruction of trees and the lush foliage inside what it called Manila's "last lung." The park was declared an archaeological site by the National Museum in April 2003.

Cops get hold of mystery car in Makati seminary

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NOW, THE mystery can be unraveled.

Police may soon start answering questions about a white Mitsubishi Galant that had caused alarm at the San Carlos Seminary since Friday when former government agent Samuel Ong sought refuge at the Roman Catholic formation center.

The car was turned over to the Southern Police District (SPD) Anti-Carnapping unit yesterday afternoon.

Ong, who has accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of cheating in last year's presidential elections, raised suspicion that the car was to be used in an attempt to assassinate him.

Rifle partially hidden

Seminary security officials said that no one had claimed the car where an M-16 assault rifle was partially hidden in the passenger seat.

"We negotiated with the seminary [administration] and finally, they agreed to turn over the car to us," said Chief Supt. Wilfredo Garcia, SPD director.

On Saturday afternoon, Garcia went to the seminary to investigate the presence of the car. However, like many politicians who had arrived ahead of him, Garcia was denied entry into the seminary.

The car drew the attention of Ong's supporters on Friday evening. They promptly showed it to members of media.

Ong's supporters suspected that it might have been the car used by three to five armed men who had entered the seminary to find, and possibly kill, the former government agent.

Tapes of alleged cheating

Ong, who used to be National Bureau of Investigation deputy director, sought refuge at the seminary after feeling that his life was in danger for possessing four audio tapes containing alleged proof that Ms Arroyo had cheated to win in the polls.

"We will look into the vehicle's ownership, and we will see if there is really a gun inside," said Garcia.

Police can check the car's registration through the Land Transportation Office (LTO) using its chassis and engine number.

But since government offices would be closed today, a special nonworking holiday, police may begin their check at the LTO only tomorrow.

Seminary security officers could not say when the white Galant was driven into the seminary, and who was driving it then.

Lanot murder case still hangs

THE POLICE have reportedly questioned more than 100 people in their investigation into the murder of former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot.

However, two months after Lanot was shot to death inside a crowded Pasig City restaurant, police have yet to announce any solid leads that would pin down the killer or the mastermind of the murder.

Nonetheless, Ken, the eldest son of Lanot, appealed to police to stay focused and continue working to solve the case in the soonest possible time.

"In fairness to the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police, we know they are doing their job," Ken said.

He said authorities had noted that the crime was well-planned, giving investigators a hard time.

Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela said, "We are working to solve the case."

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Shell hangs tough, bumps off Sta. Lucia

By June Navarro

UNDERDOG Shell outlasted Sta. Lucia for the second straight time to knock the Realtors out of the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference with an 87-85 victory in the deciding game last night of their wildcard matchup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Tony Dela Cruz missed two game-clinching

SHELL/ A27

CELINO Cruz of Shell (foreground) and Recaredo Calimag of Sta. Lucia scramble for possession during their game last night at the Araneta colliseum.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

SPORTS TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Finals—Pistons vs Spurs, Game 2; 9 a.m. (r – 9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Detroit and San Antonio continue their series. *Schedules subject to change without prior notice.*

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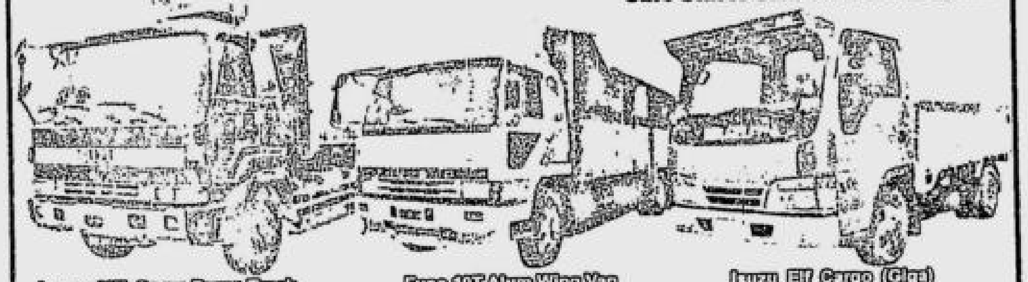

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Romance in a cup of tea

A sexual act is an excellent form of exercise. Using almost all of your muscles, it burns up to 300 calories an hour which is almost equivalent to 15 minutes of walking in the treadmill. Studies also show that engaging in a loving, intimate relationship through rewarding and regular intercourse improves the well-being of a person. It makes one feel younger, less irritable and happy because of the endorphins and oxytocin released during the blissful activity of making love. These naturally occurring chemicals serve as natural opiates that act as pain and anxiety killers.

But as men age, their sexual capacity is lessened. Add to that the stress they get from their surroundings and their relationships will be doomed. They will often feel tired. Ergo, they will have less urge to engage in intimate moments with their partners. But then again, science understands the needs of men. From the makers of the well-established slimming tea for women Kankunis comes yet another breakthrough product Honey Moon Tea, Love Potion for Men is the answer to men's sexual drive problems. Made from natural ingredients carefully researched to solve erectile dysfunctions, increase sexual desire and prolong orgasms-this tea does not need any prescription at all.

Honey Moon Tea is a concoction of traditional Chinese herbs *Herba Epimedu, Herba Cynomoru, Woodwardia Japonica, Fructus Polygalea, Yang Gong Cao, Radix Polygalea, Semen Astragali Complanali, Radix Ginseng and Pilose Antler.* The potion promotes endocrine regulation to help lengthen sexual climax by empowering the body's metabolism during intercourse.

Mixed in the right proportion, the herbs are also known to help improve the immune system of the body and reinforce the functions of the liver and the kidney. The herbs also have curative benefits and help rid off free-radicals in the body. *Herba Epimedu, Herba Cynomoru* and *Woodwardia Japonica* also contain saponins and glycosides which are known as body-building agents that strengthen the bones and the muscles. *Radix Polygalea* invigorates the kidney and the spleen. *Semen Astragali Complanali* improves the eyesight. *Fructus Polygalea* and *Yang Gong Cao* are known as anti-inflammatory agents for pharyngitis. These are also used traditionally as sedative, expectorant, and resuscitating agent. The famous *Radix Ginseng* which is considered a male aphrodisiac is a tonic herb that athletes use to combat stress. The *Pilose Antler* contains sex hormones, estrone and estranediol which helps the sexual glands to secrete more for longer erection of the male genitalia.

Advisable for men from their 30s and up, Honey Moon Tea is also for dynamic men who want to intensify their sexual activities through improved sexual drive and for men who need extra stamina for prolonged physical activities like sports. It is to be consumed at least 10-15 minutes before the sexual activity. It is available in tin boxes with 30 sachets each. Modestly priced at ₱2,100 per box, it is a better alternative than resorting to costly chemically-produced medicines which have harmful side effects for the body.

Honey Moon Tea, Love Potion for Men is exclusively distributed by REJ Diamond Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and is now available in all leading drugstores and supermarkets.

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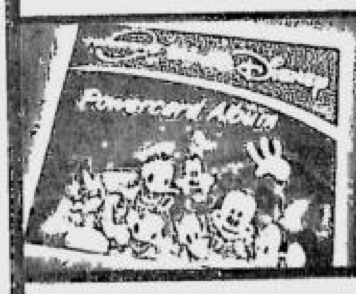

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	4 STAR WARS EP. 3	5 MADAGASCAR / MR. & MRS. SMITH	6 MR. & MRS. SMITH	7 SHUTTER
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GB3	1 THX MR. & MRS. SMITH 12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MR. & MRS. SMITH 12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:10, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 MADAGASCAR 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 MR. & MRS. SMITH 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 MR. & MRS. SMITH 1:10, 3:50, 6:30, 9:10, 12:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	
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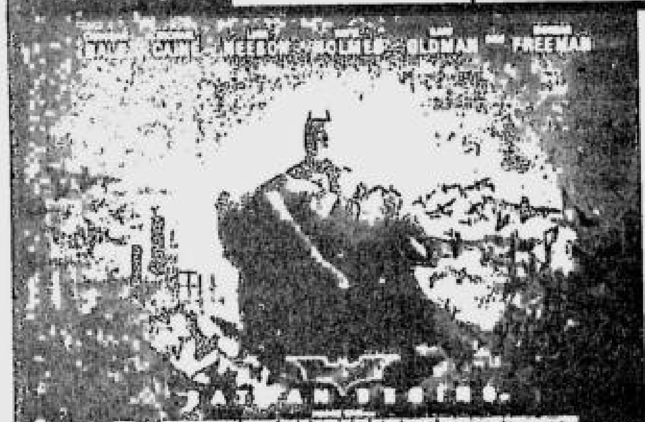

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June 11 & 12	Passage des Embouteilles Street Theater (Greenbelt 3) 2pm and 8pm
June 13 - 30	The Man Who Planted Trees Art Exhibit (Glorietta Artspace)
June 14	Indoor Circus by Camille Boitel (Greenbelt 1, Onstage) 8:00pm
June 17 - 19	10th French Film Festival regular run (Ayala Center Cebu)
June 18	Fete de la Musique (Greenbelt 3)

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1:15 4:00 6:45 9:30
2 MR. AND MRS. SMITH
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
3 SHUT UP AND KISS ME
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40
4 STAR WARS Episode III
12:40 3:40 6:40 9:40
5 A LOT LIKE LOVE
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
6 MADAGASCAR
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
7 HOUSE OF WAX
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
8 PREMONITION
1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
9 SIN CITY
1:40 4:20 7:00 9:40
10 SHUTTER
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 MR. AND MRS. SMITH 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 SHUTTER
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
3 MADAGASCAR
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
4 PREMONITION
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5 SHUT UP AND KISS ME 12:00 1:50
MR. AND MRS. SMITH 4:10 6:40 9:10
6 A LOT LIKE LOVE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
7 SIN CITY
12:40 [illegible] [illegible] 7:40 9:50

METRO EAST 682-6193 - 682-6199

1 SHUTTER
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 MADAGASCAR
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
3 A LOT LIKE LOVE
12:05 2:20 4:30 6:45 9:00
4 STAR WARS Episode III
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00
5 SIN CITY
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6 MR. AND MRS. SMITH
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7 MR. AND MRS. SMITH
12:00 2:30 5:00 [illegible] 10:00
8 PREMONITION
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

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2 THE INTERPRETER
3 STAR WARS Episode III
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SPECIAL NUMBER Members of the national gymnastics team honing up for the Southeast Asian Games perform a special Independence Day celebration number before an enthusiastic crowd that included President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday at the Quirino Grandstand.

WNC prevails in Ching Cup opener

GAMES TODAY
3 p.m.— Silliman U vs USC
5 p.m.—Myong Ji vs West Negros
7 p.m.—Xiamen vs RP team (Exhibition)

DUMAGUETE CITY—Donald Quilantez and Bunjie Vergara fueled West Negros College's offense for an 83-67 stomping of Cebu's Salazar College of Science Institute of Technology in the YKL 4th Asian University Basketball Championship: Carl Menky Ching Cup yesterday at the Lamberto Macias gymnasium here.

Quilantez and Vergara topscored with 18 points apiece, while Jun Alisbo and Stanley Tizon chipped in 10 points each.

The WNC Mustangs overcame a slow start by shackling SCSIT's hotshots, Nowell Balili and Viz Cabili, in the annual tournament last won by St. Francis of Assisi College in 2001 in Manila.

Quilantez and Vergara teamed up in a 12-5 run to lift the Mustangs, 44-30, at the end of the third period.

The Negrenses then cruised to their biggest advantage, 79-58, in the final four minutes.

The RP National Team will see action against the visiting Xiamen University at 7 p.m today.

Meanwhile, Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz cited the Basketball Association of the Philippines and the Province of Negros Oriental for the successful opening of the international basketball tournament.

ASIAN OPEN KARTING

Twin win for Guidicelli

CARMONA, Cavite—Matteo Guidicelli roared to an impressive double victory in the rain yesterday to dominate the kickoff leg of the Asia Zone Open Karting Championship at the Carmona Circuit Philippines here.

Lady Luck abandoned Asian karting queen Michele Bumgarner early in the race, allowing Guidicelli, the reigning Karter of the Year, to take the Rotax Max Seniors class and the Intercon-A class crowns in a big show of force.

A heavy downpour delayed the races and rendered the 1.3-km track slippery, but this played to the hands of Guidicelli.

The 15-year-old Guidicelli of the Cebu Racing Group took charge in the third lap when the pace-setting Bumgarner of M&M Racing nearly spun out while negotiating a curve.

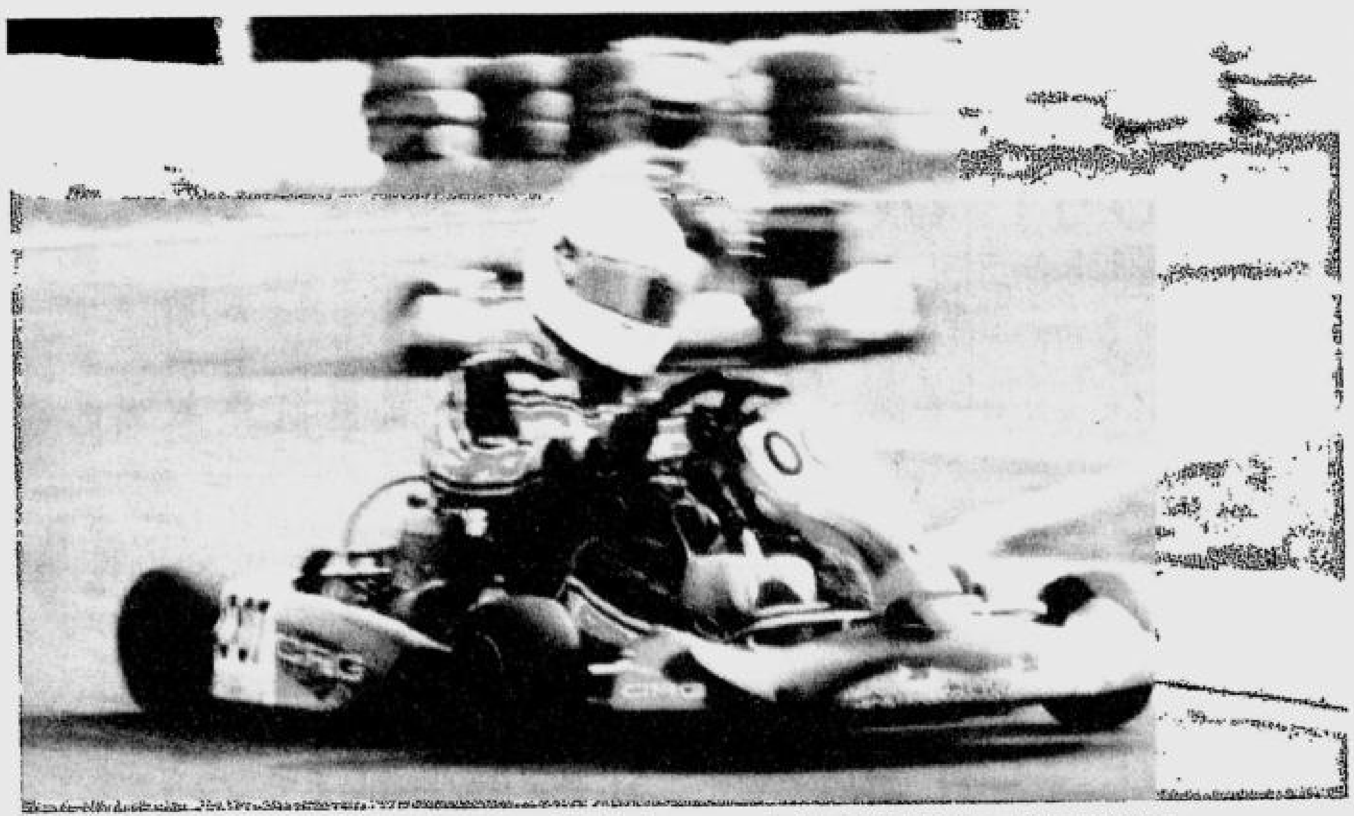
Bumgarner never managed to recover, finishing a badly beaten fourth in a field of seven in the ICA class she was tipped to dominate. She finished ahead of brother Mark.

The lopsided win was a fitting follow-up to Guidicelli's victory in the Rotax Max Seniors class earlier.

He shielded teammate Ivan Carapiet from Hong Kong's Ross Jamison right from the start of the 22-lap race before stepping on the gas in the final straight for a come-from-behind triumph.

"I like the weather, it worked fine for me," said Guidicelli.

The CIK-FIA event, sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines and sponsored by Pilipinas Shell, Denso Iridium Power, Bridgestone, Vivere Suite Hotel and Palmer Asia, was also supported by Addict Mobile, DMCI Homes, Eastway Motorcycle Racing, Areomed and Aviva Insurance.



MATTEO Guidicelli (foreground) pulls away from Michele Bumgarner in the fateful third lap of the main race.

Guidicelli clocked a fast 46.002 in the ICA class followed by Indy Villalon of Fila-Birel in 45.217. Arvin Dueco, who entered the race as a privateer, was third in 46.560 in the event backed by PLDT myPAD.

"I felt confident at the start," said Guidicelli, whose brakes started to heat up in the final two laps. "I feel very, very lucky and I thank God for blessing me. I'm just lucky to have survived it all."

Bumgarner, 16, charged her defeat to experience, saying she will bounce back in the next legs of the event.

In the Rotax class, Guidicelli finished in 55.112 with Carapiet second (55.127) and Jamison third (55.527).

While Guidicelli and his supporters whooped it up, Bumgarner was left speechless by the devastating loss that put to naught all her hard work in the qualifying and pre-final races.

"I nearly spun out in the third lap," she said. "Lady Luck abandoned me in the end."

Bumgarner looked every inch a winner as soon as the race was flagged off, setting the pace with her younger brother Mark a close second and Guidicelli watching in third. Her decision to race with wet tires even as the track was quickly drying up cost her the race.

Malaysian Jazeman Firhan and Andrew Tang of Singapore shared the day's honors, ruling the Rotax Juniors race and the Cadet 85 race, respectively.

Firhan beat Indonesian Rio Haryanto and RP bet Marlon Stockinger while Tang finished ahead of Indons Dustin Sofyan and Senna Sulaiman Noor.

Race enthusiasts can log on to www.mypad.net for race highlights.

Paolo Eslao ruled the Formula SL class while John Alvarez of the CRG won the Cadet 60 division.

De La Salle volleybelles target sweep

GAMES TODAY
(*Rizal Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—San Sebastian vs Ateneo
5 p.m.—Santo Tomas vs La Salle

LA SALLE sets out for a sweep of the elimination round when it battles defending champion University of Santo Tomas today in the Shakey's V-League at the Rizal Coliseum.

Unscathed in eight matches, the Lady Archers will again bank on Maureen Penetrante and Michelle Carolino against the UST triumvirate of Roxanne Pimentel, Mary Jean Balse and Joyce Pano at 5 p.m.

Second-running San Sebastian takes on Ateneo at 3 p.m.

The four teams have already made it to the semifinals, which kicks off next week.

The Lady Archers defeated the Tigresses in straight sets, 25-22, 25-19, 25-20, last month.

But coach August Sta. Maria noted the Tigresses' renewed confidence after stopping the tournament's surprise package, San Sebastian, 25-14, 25-17, 25-15, on Saturday, for their sixth victory in nine outings.

"Slowly, the players are regaining their confidence," said Sta. Maria.

Although the Lady Stags (6-2) are favored to prevail with Cherry Rose Macatangay at the helm, the unpredictable Lady Eagles (4-4) are capable of pulling a shocker.

The four semifinalists will play each other twice with the top two teams battling it out for the championship in a best-of-three showdown.

Karla Tricia V. Magno

Spalding rolls out NBA Finals balls

SPALDING
SPURS

AS THE 2005 NBA Finals fever heats up, Spalding rolls out special San Antonio Spurs and Detroit Pistons basketballs.

Carrying the team colors of the two-time titlist Spurs and defending champion Pistons, the Spalding balls are made of tough durable cover and come in two sizes—the seven-inch official NBA game ball size and the three-inch kid size.

The Spurs and Pistons basketballs, which are exclusively distributed by Pro Line Sport Center, also come in a mini-backboard and ball set.

"Spalding and Proline are dedicated to giving the true blue NBA fans in the Philippines the full NBA experience," said Joven Babaan of Proline Sport Center.

Shell hangs tough, bumps off Sta. Lucia

From page A25

free throws but came up with the defensive gem of the game, knocking the ball off the hands of Boyet Fernandez as Shell became the seventh team in league history to break up an opposing team's twice-to-win advantage.

The win sent Shell to the best-of-three quarterfinals opposite Purefoods.

Markus Melvin banged in 40 points and grabbed 15 rebounds as the TJ Hotdogs trounced the FedEx Express, 94-86, in the second game to wrap up their own best-of-three series.

After missing the free throws, Dela Cruz prevented the potential game-tying play by the Realtors with that tap off Fernandez, leaving import Ryan Fletcher with an impossible heave from backcourt in an attempt to turn things around at the buzzer.

"We refused to give up even though we almost finished at the tailend of the standings," said Shell coach Leo Austria, whose team came into this phase ranked ninth.

Kenneth Duremdes committed four crucial errors in succession to help doom the Realtors.

Duremdes had two passing errors and an offensive foul before turning the ball over again inside the final three minutes as Shell survived the absence of import Ajani Williams in that stretch.

Williams fouled out after bumping a driving Fletcher for 83-84.

The scores:

First Game

SHELL 87—Alvarez 17, Williams 17, Calaguio 16, Yap 10, Mamaril 8, Dela Cruz 8, Tubid 5, Sotto 3, Ferreria 2, Cruz 1.

STA. LUCIA 85—Duremdes 22, Fletcher 19, Mendoza 16, Espino 12, Calimag 6, Omolon 5, Demape 3, Gonzales 2, Santos 0, Tolomia 0, Fernandez 0.

Quarters: 26-20, 51-49, 71-65, 87-85

Second Game

PUREFOODS 94—Melvin 40, Yap 18, Laure 9, Castillo 8, Raymundo 7, Evangelista 5, Yee 5, Madrid 2, Artadi 0, Simon 0.

FEDEX 86 – Miller 22, Ritualo 20, Gonzales 13, De Ocampo 8, Pingris 7, David 7, Arboleda 5, Ferriols 4, Dacia 0, Billones 0.

Quarters: 27-10, 51-39, 68-64, 94-86

Barron plays with savvy and composure

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

RED BULL Barako's Earl Barron is the import to watch in the ongoing PBA Fiesta Conference.

Barron, from Memphis, Tennessee, is not only tall at seven feet, but he also plays with savvy and composure, the kind of player who can connect with the fans; an import the other teams cannot take for granted.

Since joining the Photokina franchise of sportsman George Chua last month, Barron has been instrumental in leading Red Bull to stirring victories over sister teams Purefoods, Coca-Cola and Barangay Ginebra while losing only once to league leader San Miguel Beer.

Last Saturday at the Ynares Sports Center in Antipolo City, Barron sizzled anew, scoring a team-high 34 points, hauling down 16 rebounds and sinking 20 out of 22 free throws to spark never-say-die Red Bull to a gut-wrenching, 90-89 come-from-behind triumph over Ginebra. It was the Barakos' third victory in as many meetings over the Gin Kings this season.

Down by 27 big points (36-36) at the start of the second half, the Barakos slowly inched their way to close the gap in the third and final quarter, overhauling the Gin Kings' lead behind the heroics—in both defense and offense—of Barron, EJ Feihl, Bryan Gahol, Junthy Valenzuela and Lordy Tugade. Four straight charities by Barron in the closing seconds of play sealed the nail-biting win.

"It was one of the greatest comeback victories the league had ever seen," said coach Yeng Guiao of the team's hard-earned win. "There is no question that Earl (Barron) is a good player, a player who inspires the locals in the team. Bryan (Gahol) and EJ (Feihl) also performed well and contributed to our victory."

Red Bull will now meet Alaska Aces in the quarterfinal series starting on Wednesday.

* * *

WHY EALA SHOULD SECURE A GAB LICENSE. I agree with Games and Amusements Board chair Eric Buhain who recently asked PBA commissioner Noli Eala to secure a license from the GAB. This GAB requirement is basic to all who intend to engage in professional sports. Simple as that.

Eala's reported refusal to comply with a simple requirement does not sit well with many because Eala's action could very well be construed as arrogance of sort, a disrespect to officials duly authorized to execute the rules of the country's governing body for all pro sports. In a letter to Buhain, the PBA legal counsel defended their stand, pointing out that PD 871 states that only those who are directly involved in the conduct of the games are required to secure licenses or permits from the GAB, therefore, the PBA Commissioner is not required to secure a license under PD 871 because he is not directly involved in the conduct of the games. "The PBA, and not the commissioner, conducts professional basketball games," the PBA legal counsel said.

But I beg to disagree. In my view, all persons performing duties connected with professional sports should secure a license from the GAB before they can practice their profession. This was even made clearer by Resolution No. 02-06 series of 2002 published in the Official Gazette which declared that the commissioner of the PBA as an official of a professional sports organization is required to secure a license from the GAB. The GAB added that the PBA as an entity conducting professional basketball activities shall also apply for a promoter's license. Some years back when I headed the Philippine Sportswriters Association, I applied for a promoter's license from the GAB in order to promote the PSA Fiesta Fistiana benefit boxing show for the country's disabled boxers. There was no problem then as everything went smoothly.

* * *

MARILAO WINS BULACAN CAGE TITLE. Winning seven straight games, Marilao emerged champion of the just-ended Gov. Josie dela Cruz Inter-Town Basketball Tournament, beating Meycauayan in the finals held recently in Malolos City. Supported by Marilao Mayor Peping Guillermo and SK chair Alexis Castro, the champion team was composed of Jun Dizon, Arong Pena, Jomar Santos, Imo dela Cruz, Isay Tamayo, William Tiqui, Aldrin Gamba, Macky Ovenson, Ron Gamba, Mac-Mac Gumatay, Ace Herrera, Dodie Pena and Mark Ledesma, with Jay and Jeff Iñigo, as coach and assistant coach, respectively . . . MORE BASKETBALL NEWS. For a complete viewing of this year's NBA Finals between the defending champions Detroit Pistons and the San Antonio Spurs, Channel 56 (on Bulacan Home Cable) is broadcasting the games live sans the commercial breaks.

MILO MARATHON
PRESS CONFER
Manila Ballroom

MILO MARATHON: Organizer Rudy Biscocho (fourth from left) explains the race's state-of-the-art technology to prevent fraudulent winners in the 29th National Milo Marathon. The device, which uses biometric fingerprint scans, will be used in the races that kick off in General Santos City on June 26. Others in photo are (from left) 2004 champions Roy Vence and Stella Diaz, former Gintong Alay chief Michael M. Keon, Milo Sports executive Pat Goc Ong, Nestlé Phils. SVP Eugene David and brand manager Michelle Calo.

First-timer tops GH run

UNHERALDED Salvador Anda stepped up the pace in the final 350 meters yesterday to rule the second all-Greenhills Inter-Village run.

A high school student in Camarines Sur, Anda won a race in his very first try, frolicking in the absence of the big guns to clock 18 minutes and 27 seconds for the 5-km race.

Anda poured it all out in the final 350 m to beat Edwin Panelo, who timed 18:36, and win a pair of Nike running shoes, Sun Bolt sports drinks and a medal.

The race, which ended in front of the Northeast Greenhills Clubhouse, was supported by Sun Bolt Sports Drink, Nike, Greenhills Running Club, and organized by RACE.

Shangri-la Mall's Reggie Lumawag finished third with a modest 19:33 time.

Marikina Runners Club's Daisy Castillon won the distaff side with a time of 24:30, followed by Ateneo's Maricel Cimafranca at 25:04.

Fairview Running Club's Monique Nimo was third at 26:47.

Northeast Greenhills president, Warren R. Pardilla, sports chair Teddy Ortiga, Sun Bolt Sports Drink president Freddie Hererra and all-Greenhills run project chair Ric Bernabe awarded the prizes.

Perkin Chai (23:49), Michael Chan (24:25) and Emerson Go Tian (28:13) bagged the first three places in the Resident division for men, while Anson Go Tian (31:09), Mayda Custodio (34:54), and Elizabeth Raymundo (46:15), Mother Lily M. Monteverde (50:49) topped the women's side.

Laila makes history with 1st WBC crown

WASHINGTON—Her dad came to watch, and Laila Ali did him proud.

With Muhammad Ali at ringside Saturday night, Laila Ali pounded Erin Toughill into submission in the third round to remain undefeated and become the first woman to win a World Boxing Council title.

Muhammad Ali got into the ring, hugged his daughter and gave her tender kisses after she stopped the outclassed Toughill at 1:59 of the third round.

Toughill took about 20 consecutive punches in her corner before referee Joseph Cooper stepped in to stop the fight.

Laila Ali, who is generally recognized as the top woman in boxing, improved to 21-0 by winning the super middleweight fight against a fighter with far less experience.

"It's wonderful anytime my dad is there," Laila Ali said. "It lights a fire in me."

Ali had promised to give Toughill a beating, and she did just that in the fight on the undercard of the Mike Tyson-Kevin McBride fight.

Toughill had only eight professional fights in five years, and four of those were against women who had never had a fight.

"She talks like me," Muhammad Ali said.

"I back it up, too, don't I, Daddy?" Laila replied.

Toughill did land some effective punches in the first round, mostly left hooks.

But Ali's speed and power were too much and she began taking a beating in the second round.

By the end, Toughill (6-2-1) could not punch back. AP

PROUD DAD: Muhammad Ali kisses his daughter after getting the WBC belt. REUTERS

Afleet Alex roars to 7-

BELMONT, New York—Afleet Alex roared past Giacomo at the top of the stretch en route to a convincing seven-length victory Saturday in the one million-dollar Belmont Stakes.

After Giacomo won the Kentucky Derby as a 50-1 longshot and Afleet Alex captured the Preakness Stakes despite a near fall, the last stop in American racing's Triple Crown, the 1 1/2-mile Belmont, was billed as the race that could determine the 3-year-old champion.

If so, Afleet Alex clearly staked his claim to the honor.

Jockey Jeremy Rose, riding his first Belmont, bided his time with Afleet Alex, who trailed by as many as 10 lengths at the half-mile point.

Giacomo took the lead from Southern Africa as the final turn approached before Rose urged on Afleet Alex, who swept past Giacomo in the top of the stretch and pulled away.

Giacomo, ridden by Mike Smith, faded to seventh, 17 lengths behind Afleet Alex.

"I had the best horse," Rose said. "The only thing that could get him beat was me, so I stayed out of his way.

"He should be a Triple Crown winner, but I messed up or whatever," Rose added of Afleet Alex's failure to win the Kentucky Derby. "I say I mes best horse. You ca trainer) and you c

"So, if you ha

JOCKEY Jeremy Rose, aboard Afleet Alex (right), looks bac

Tyson declares career over after humbling 6-rd defeat

WASHINGTON—Mike Tyson learned the hard way that he no longer has the heart for boxing, taking a beating from Irishman Kevin McBride before quitting after six rounds here Saturday in what he called his ring farewell.

"I can't do this no more. I can't lie to myself," Tyson said. "I can't do this. I'm not going to embarrass the sport anymore. This is just my ending.

"That's it. It's finished."

Tyson's controversial 20-year career saw him become the undisputed heavyweight champion from 1987 to 1990 and fall into disgrace with rape and assault convictions and a one-year ban for biting Evander Holyfield's ears.

"I just don't have it in me," Tyson said. "I'm just finished with this. I'm no good anymore. I don't think I have the stomach for this anymore. I don't have anything to fight for anymore."

Tyson's final moments in boxing came late in a wild sixth round in which Tyson head-butted McBride and trapped his foe's left arm, arousing fears he might break it the way he nearly once did South African Francois Botha's arm.

"I was desperate to win," Tyson admitted. "Man, I would have done anything."

Referee Joe Cortez took two points from Tyson for the head-butt, which opened a gash under McBride's left eye. The Irish journeyman rallied and pinned Tyson on the ropes before shoving him onto his rear as round six ended.

CAN TAKE IT NO MORE: Mike Tyson sits on the canvas at the end of round six after Ireland's Kevin McBride pushed him to the mat. REUTERS

Tyson stayed seated for a few moments, then hesitatingly rose and walked to his corner, nevermore to return, his attempted comeback crushed.

"I didn't want to get up. I was tired," Tyson said. "It wasn't in my heart. I was doing it, but I didn't want to go forward. I just didn't have the desire to continue fighting.

"I felt like I was 120 years old. I feel like Rip Van Winkle right now."

In many ways, Tyson admitted that his boxing career has been over since the night in Tokyo when Buster Douglas knocked him out in the 10th round to take away the undisputed crown. McBride simply finished the job Douglas started.

"My career has been over since 1990," Tyson said. "I'm not interested in fighting anymore."

Tyson's career ended 50-6 after his third loss in his final four fights. The man who warned McBride he would "gut him like a fish" admitted "I don't have the guts to fight anymore." McBride rose to 33-4 with one draw. *AFP*

Unstoppable Annika zeroes in on 9th Slam

HAVRE DE GRACE, Maryland—Annika Sorenstam tightened her grip on a record third successive LPGA Championship after a third-round three-under-par 69 gave her a comfortable five-shot lead on Saturday.

The Swede had six birdies on the Bulle Rock Golf Course layout as the opposition wilted and she now appears certain to collect her second major of the year—the ninth of her career—to be halfway toward her goal of winning all four in one season.

Sorenstam ended the day on 12-under 204, while South Korea's Kim Young, who has never finished better than fifth in three years on Tour and has only had one top 10 this season, eased into second place on seven-under-par after a 68.

Five players share third place on five-under, including 15-year-old American amateur Michelle Wie, who had a 71, and Britain's Laura Davies, who had been in second place just two behind at halfway but slipped to a 74.

"Obviously I'm very happy with a five-shot lead, but I've got to sleep on it and be patient tomorrow," Sorenstam said.

"I've lost a five-shot lead before but I'm excited and looking forward to a great Sunday.

"My goal tomorrow is to come, play, win and leave. This is an important tournament for me and I'm going to fight to the end.

"This would be another step toward my goal (of winning majors for a season's Grand but I try not to think about much.

A downhearted Davies, wi ble-bogeyed the 18th, summed up the feelings of ev when she suggested: "We're ing for second place. Nobod ing to beat Annika tomorrow.

Sorenstam played with who had an erratic round, leader added: "I try not to Laura too much. She's an nothing sort of player.

"I would say she plays w heart and I like to say that I pl my brain."

Jennifer Rosales of the pines shot a 69 and moved to of ninth spot with 213 to Marisa Baena (73), Christ (67) and Karen Koch, who a a 69.

It will be the third time th has played with Sorenstam, 25-year-old said she would and play her own game.

For Wie, there is the chan possible third top 10 in five appearances.

The powerful teen show love of the big occasion when her approach to five feet at t and sank the putt to break the third consecutive day.

WORLD No. 1 Annika Sorenstam celebrates her birdie on No. 7. AFP

Drugs taint hounds Montgomery, Jones

MONTERREY, Mexico—Tim Montgomery, the 100m world record holder whose competitive future is in the balance after his hearing on doping charges this week, posted a dismal 10.43sec here Saturday in the 100m at the Galatletica athletics meeting.

Montgomery finished next-to-last in his race, won by American JJ Johnson in 10.18 seconds.

Montgomery's companion Marion Jones, a five-time Olympic medalist who has faced drug rumors—but no actual charges—fared little better.

She finished fourth in the women's 100m in 11.40sec, 26-hundredths of a second behind the winner, Chandra Sturrup of the Bahamas. AFP

Button pips Schumi for Canadian F1 pole

MONTREAL, Canada—Jenson Button put his BAR-Honda team back to the front of Formula One here Saturday when he claimed a triumphant pole position for Sunday's Canadian Grand Prix.

Briton Button, who finished third in last year's championship behind the two Ferrari drivers, put in a stunning time of 1:15.217 midway through the session that proved unbeatable for his rivals.

The result marked a belated return to the front for BAR-Honda, who struggled to perform in the early races and were banned for two events, in Spain and Monaco, after failing to prove their car legal in San Marino.

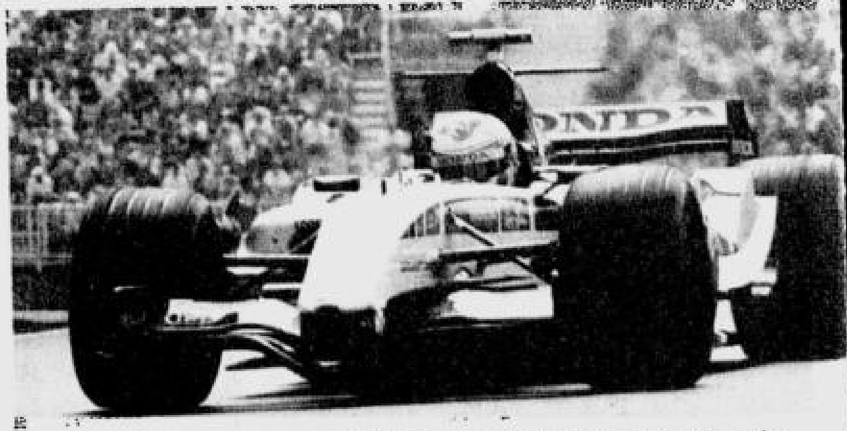
"I am a bit surprised actually," Button said. "We expected to come here and be reasonably quick, but we didn't quite expect to challenge the Renaults and McLarens.

"But it is good to be here and it is a huge boost for the team. We have had a tough few months and they have worked exceptionally hard so it is good to give them something back.

"I think we have got a good race package. I am not going to say too much because I have seen the Renaults and McLarens in practice and their race pace looks good. But this is a good start for us."

Button's time put him 0.258 seconds ahead of reigning world champion Michael Schumacher, who had expected to struggle but came back to secure his second front row start of the season.

Schumacher has won the last three events here and had admitted his hopes of securing his eighth Canadian GP are slim because of handling difficulties with his Ferrari. *AFP*


BAR Honda's Jenson Button of Britain en route to posting the fastest lap.

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-length Belmont Stakes victory

at the field as he heads for the finish line. REUTERS

d up because I had the
't blame Tim (Ritchey,
n't blame Afleet Alex.
e to blame someone,

blame me."

But Ritchey was full of praise for Rose's ride on Saturday.

"All I kept saying was 'Be patient, be patient, be patient. Wait, wait, wait,'" Ritchey said. "When Jeremy asked him, he just exploded."

He was also pleased with Rose's ground-saving in the early going.

"That was the plan," Ritchey said. "With these big, wide turns you have to save all the ground you can. Jeremy Rose has now ridden three Triple Crown races like a Hall of Famer."

Smith said Giacomo had some difficulty breathing.

"Down the backstretch, I could hear him make a loud, roaring noise," Smith said, adding that he believed the horse had displaced his palate. "I knew he had done it, so I got him to the outside and dropped his head—a lot of times that will help get it back. But he never did."

Smith also gave Afleet Alex credit.

"I won't take anything away from Afleet Alex. He ran great today."

Afleet Alex became just the second favorite in the last 10 years to win the Belmont Stakes, which for the first time in four years didn't have a horse going for the Triple Crown.

Afleet Alex now has eight wins in 12 starts, with the victories coming by more than 50 combined lengths.

In winning the Preakness, Afleet Alex avoided a near disaster after clipping the heels of Scrappy T at the top of the stretch.

After nearly going to his knees, he won by 4 3/4 lengths.

"He's a beast, he's a freak of nature, he's made out of steel," Rose said. "He's the best 3-year-old in the country."

Andromeda's Hero, eighth in the Kentucky Derby, came on to finish second with Rafael Bejarano in the irons.

The second-place finish had to satisfying for trainer Nick Zito, who failed to see any of his eight entries in the first two legs of the Triple Crown hit the board.

He saddled favorite Bellamy Road, who was seventh in the Kentucky Derby. AFP

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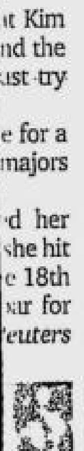


TOM Kite blasts out of a bunker on the fourth hole during the third round of the Booz Allen Classic at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland, Saturday. AP

This old Kite can still fly high

BETHESDA, Maryland—Just days after failing to keep his US Open streak alive, Tom Kite put himself in position to become the oldest winner in US PGA Tour history.

The 55-year-old Kite sank a 15-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole, bent his knees, punched the air with a fist and waved to the crowd to celebrate a 5-under 66 that put him on top of the leaderboard with a round to play in the Booz Allen Classic.

Kite's birdie—his third in the last four holes—broke a six-way tie and gave him a 10-under 203 total, one stroke ahead of Ernie Els, Stuart Appleby, Adam Scott, Luke Donald, Lee Westwood and Steve Elkington on a leaderboard that was gridlocked all day. Sixteen players are within two shots of the lead.

Earlier this week, Kite went to nearby Rockville and tried but failed to qualify for next week's US Open—a tournament he won in 1992 and hasn't missed since 1973. He hasn't won on the PGA Tour since 1993. His last Champions Tour victory was at the 3M Championship a year ago.

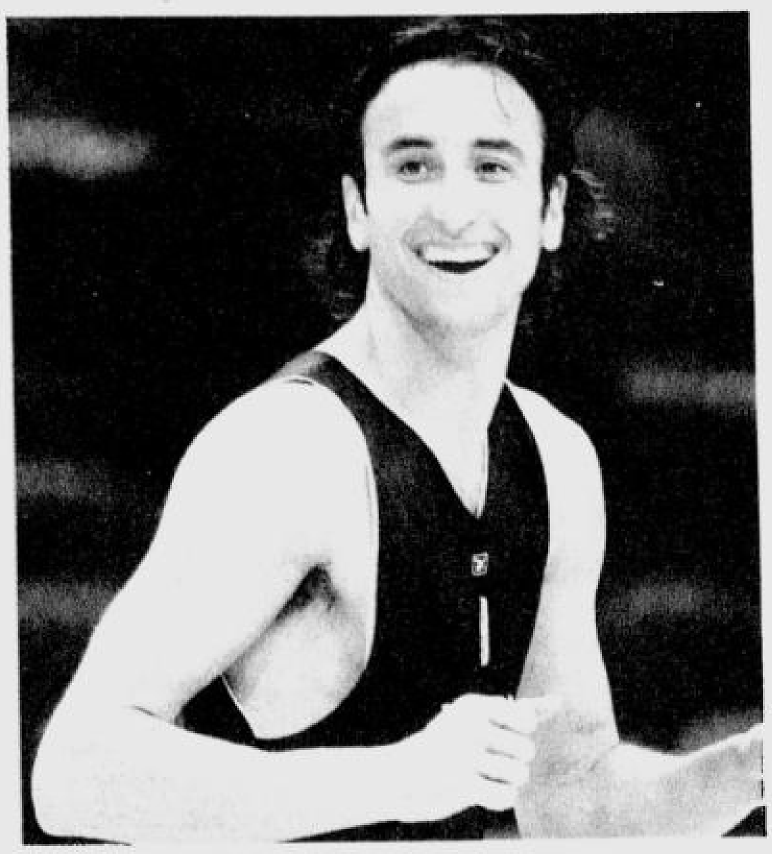
Kite is playing the American tour this year on a special one-time exemption available to players in the top 50 on the career money list. He has made just three cuts in 10 events on the regular tour.

"This is why I came back. This is the only reason that I took this little challenge to come back and play the tour, to challenge myself, to see if I had what it takes to contend, to see if I have what it takes to possibly win a golf tournament," Kite said. "Needless to say, I'm enjoying the heck out of it, and I'll be having a blast out there tomorrow."

If Kite can hold on Sunday—a daunting task considering the players on his heels—he would surpass Sam Snead as the tour's oldest winner. Snead was 52 when he won the 1965 Greater Greensboro Open.

Kite had rounds of 68, 69 and 66 on the Blue Course at Congressional Country Club, which has been surprisingly tame after a storm softened the greens early in the week.

A 3-foot putt at the par-5 15th was followed by a 35-footer at No. 16. He was under a tree in the left rough with his tee shot at No. 17, but he was able to get his approach to the front edge of the green to save par. AP



SPURS star Manu Ginobili smiles during team practice Saturday. REUTERS

Pistons hope not to misfire in key Game 2

SAN ANTONIO—All the pressure will be on the champion Detroit Pistons in Game Two of the NBA Finals on Sunday (Monday morning in Manila), with only two teams having previously come back from a 2-0 deficit to win the series.

The San Antonio Spurs went one up in the best-of-seven contest when they beat the Pistons, 84-69, in the opening game here on Thursday.

"We have to come out and compete on the level we normally compete on and once we do that, we'll be all right," Pistons center Ben Wallace told reporters.

Detroit coach Larry Brown said he was not surprised with the late rush produced by the Spurs in Game 1.

Manu Ginobili rebounded from a poor first half to score 15 points in the fourth quarter for San Antonio.

The Spurs put together a 19-4 run in the final quarter, Ginobili hitting nine of 10 shots after the intermission and all six in the fourth quarter.

"He took the ball anywhere he wanted to," said Brown. "He made every hustle play.

"When you have options like him and (Tony) Parker and Tim (Duncan), you have a great chance to execute in the fourth quarter."

Ginobili led all scorers in Game 1 with 26 points while Duncan claimed 24 points and 17 rebounds.

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich says third-year guard Ginobili always plays with passion.

"It's not once in a while but that hell-bent for leather sort of attitude, the willingness to take big shots, the willingness to do what it takes to win and to do it at the highest possible level of intensity, is there every single minute he steps on the court for 82 regular season games," said Popovich.

"I never talk to him. I never try to motivate him. I never say a word. I just watch."

Duncan says he cannot help but become a spectator when Ginobili is in a groove.

"Everything he does surprises me," said Duncan. "Even playing with him all year, when he gets into a rhythm like that where he starts going, it's like you want to sit there and watch him play.

Argentine Ginobili, who has already won an NBA title and an Olympic gold medal, played down his series-opening heroics.

"You know when the team is in trouble and so you're going to try to do something to change the pace of the game," he said. *Reuters*

Chinese booter fights for life

BEIJING—A star striker in China's national football team was in serious condition with a fractured skull after being attacked outside a restaurant in southern Shenzhen city, state press said Sunday.

Chen Yongqiang was attacked by an unidentified assailant early Saturday morning following an argument when he was leaving the restaurant after a meal early Saturday morning, the Beijing Daily Messenger reported.

The 27-year-old underwent a five-hour operation at Shenzhen's Honghui Hospital and remains in a serious condition after bone fragments were removed from his skull, the newspaper said.

It was unclear if Chen, who plays for Shenzhen's Jianlibao club, would be able to play football again, the paper quoted doctors as saying. AFP

AFP

Bautista TKOs Mexico's Bolanos in sixth, keeps unbeaten slate

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

MANDAUE CITY—Reigning World Boxing Organization Asia Pacific bantam king Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista scored a technical knockout victory over Mexican Gilberto Bolanos in the sixth round of their scheduled 10-round fight topbilling the "El Gran Combate" card here Saturday night.

Bautista floored Bolanos with a vicious right uppercut near the end of the third round and pounded his Mexican foe to bloody submission for the win.

Ranked third by the WBO, Bautista's 11th knockout victory raised his record to a perfect 16 wins. He was watched from ringside by WBO Asia Pacific chair Leon Panoncillo.

Both fighters appeared tentative in the opening round, until the Freddie Roach-trained Bautista jumped on Bolanos in the second to connect with a shot to the midsection.

"I dedicate this win to my family and fellow Boholanos," Bautista said. "I thank God for this important win."

In the main undercard, WBA no. 7 junior fly Bert Batawang demolished Elmer Muyco, who retired in the second round due to a broken left arm.

ALA Boy Caesar Amonsot scored a majority decision win over Jun Paderna in 10 rounds, even as debuting ALA Boy Rey Caitom chalked up a unanimous decision win over Reymund Legaspi.

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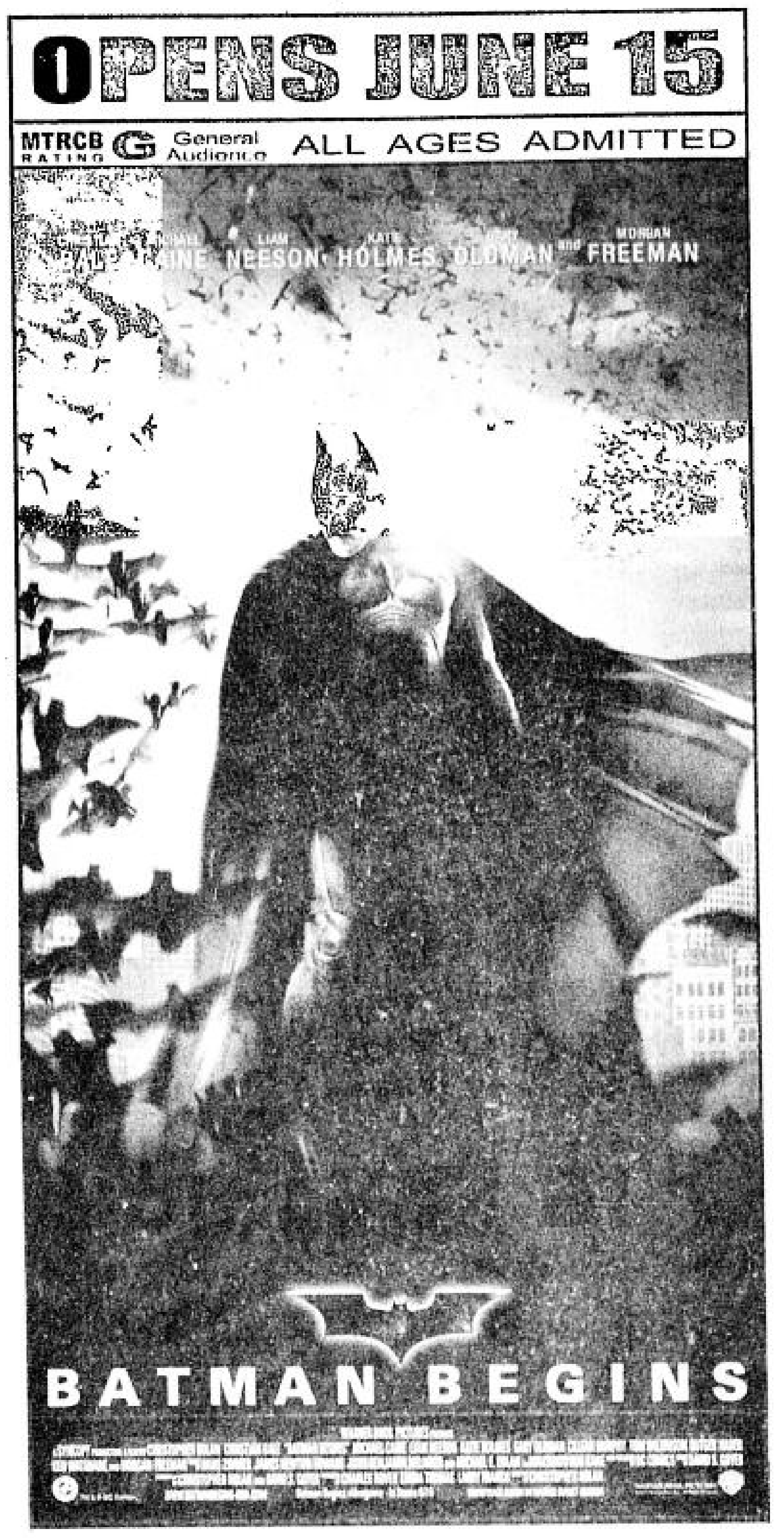
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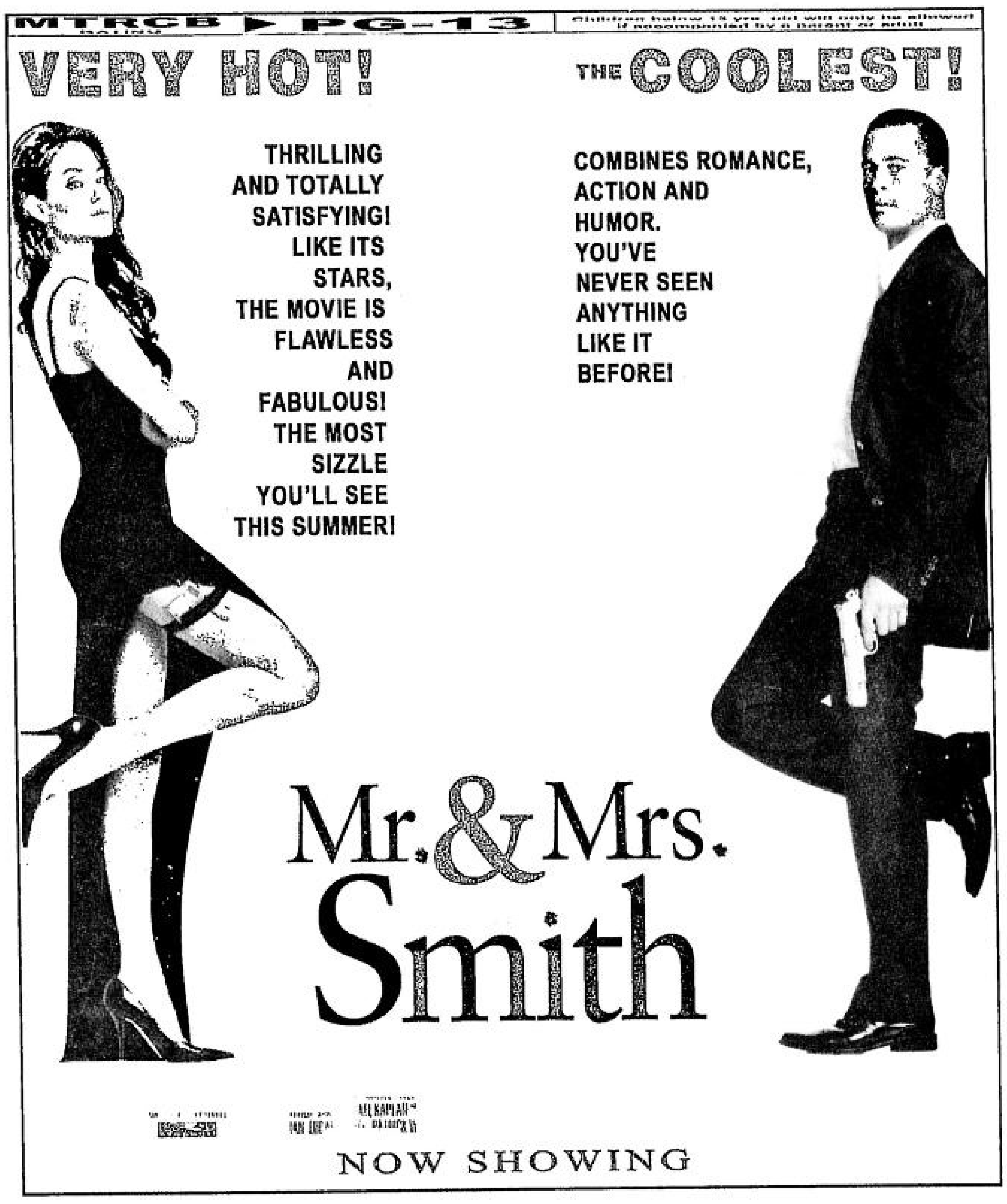
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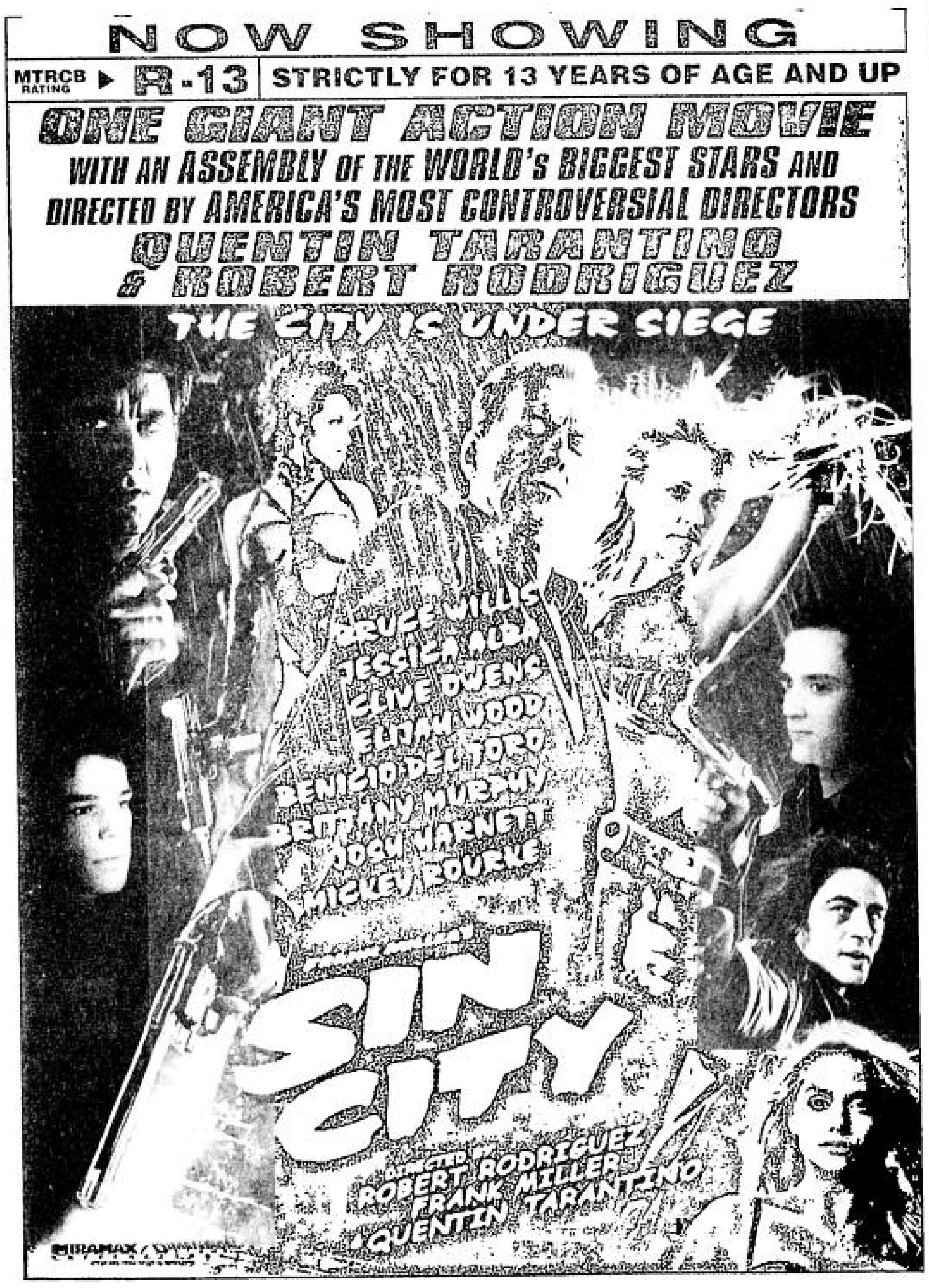
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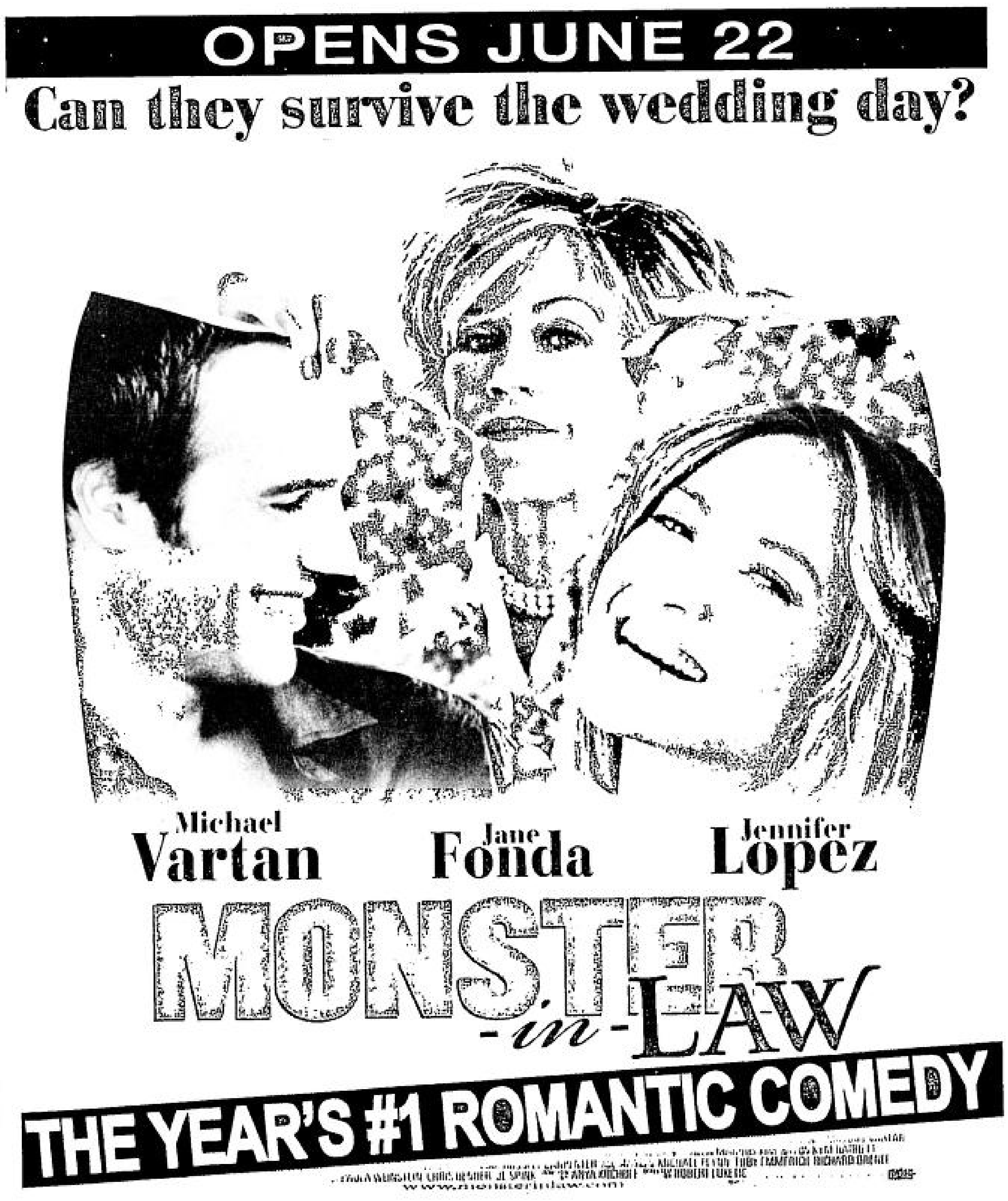
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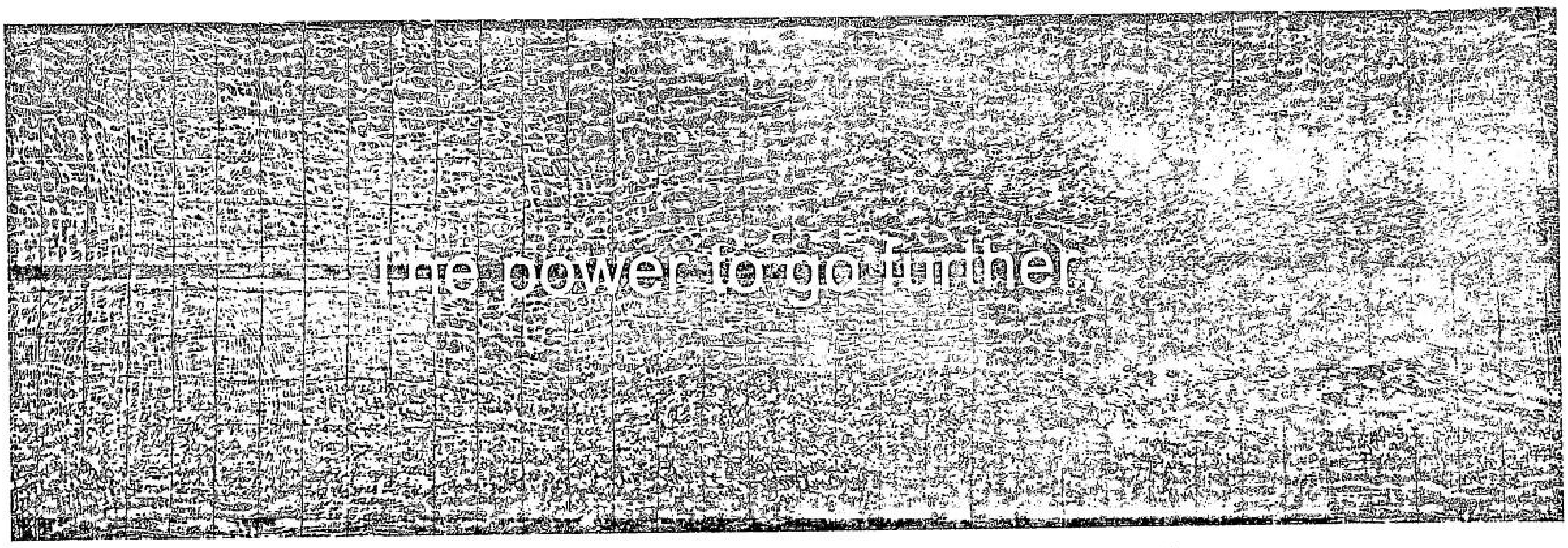
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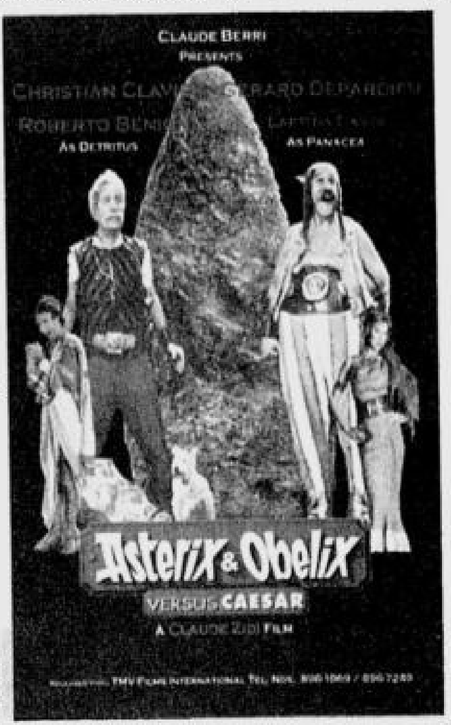

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COACH CARTER
12:40 / 3:10
SHUTTER
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STAR WARS - EPISODE III
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MR & MRS SMITH
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4 (DOLBY) STARWARS. EPISODE-3

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PBC INT'L OPEN

Prolific Paeng moves in front

FOUR-TIME World Cup champion Paeng Nepomuceno rolled an 1831 series yesterday to take the lead in the men's Open all-events of the 34th Philippine Bowling Congress Euro-Med International Open Championships at the Pearl Bowling Center in Parañaque City.

NEPOMUCENO

Nepomuceno scored 932 in the singles, 437 in the doubles and 444 in trios to dislodge national youth team member Jeff Chan, who tallied 1801. Chester King slid to third with 1762.

In the men's Class B all-events, MTCBA's Bobot Pura scored 1608 (833-413-362) to take second place behind BALP's Edmon Lara 1679 (899-382-398). MBA's Jeff Carabeo dropped to third with 1592 (773-392-427).

In the ladies Open singles, national youth skipper Apple Posadas rolled 929 (244-221-208-256) to wrest the lead from Cecilia Yap, who scored 898 (223-213-204-258). Liza del Rosario fell to third with 895 (245-226-220-204).

PBAP's Jessica Jopson posted lines of 233, 235, 172 and 185 for a total of 825 pinfalls to pace the ladies Class B, followed by TBAM's Lou Laforteza (791) and TCBA's Lynn Tan (775).

In the men's Open doubles, Thailand's Somjade Kusonpithak and Yannaphon Larapharat scorched the lanes for a 964 series to grab the lead from RP-Eastwood's Markwin Tee and Tyrone Ongpauco (926). TBAM-Prima's Biboy Rivera and Arnold Lecaros had 909 for third spot.

TBAI's Larry Tinio and Ernie Gutierrez scored 828 pinfalls to dominate the men's Class B followed by MCTBA's Boy Roman and Jojo Ventura (802). Bobot Pura and Wilson Sua, also representing MCTBA, finished third with 778.

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BAP execs Forum guests

THE NEWLY elected officials of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) will be tomorrow's special guests at the weekly forum of the Philippine Sportswriters' Association (PSA) at the Seafood Wharf Restaurant in Manila. Former senator Joey Lina, the new BAP president, is expected to discuss the association's immediate move in the wake of the suspension meted on them by the Philippine Olympic Committee. The session, sponsored by Red Bull, Circure, Supermax, Pagcor and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, is aired live over DZSR Sports Radio beginning at 10:30 a.m.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday June 13, 2005

Laura Jea
club tv
June 18/Saturday_8pm
feel_the_vibe
ABC

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4.25 PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5.10 PM)	Opids (5:35 PM)		TV Patrol World		Meteor Garden Full Edition	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Kampanerang Kuba	Ikaw Ang Lahat Sa Akin	Memories Of Bali	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider
ABC 5					Batas Barangay		TNA Impact		Sentro	Friends	The Apprentice		Fear Factor		Big News	Look Who's Talking		ESPN Golf	
GMA 7	Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	Tenjho Tenge	Shaman King	Flame Of Recca	Full House	24 Oras		Darna		Encantadia	Extra Challenge		All About Eve	Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	The Insider	NBA On RPN					Biggest Loser		Newswatch Now	Sex & the City	Cerge For Truth	
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		Asian X-Tour					IBC News Tonite	Linawin Natin	
JackTV	Street Smarts	Worst Case Scenario		Wwe Heat		WWE Velocity		Cheat	Just For Laughs	Mad TV		Kid Notorious	Comedy Central Presents	Insomniac W/ Dave Attell	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Blue Collar TV	Banzai	Joe Schmo Show	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
MYX	MYX Fiesta	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	My MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Pop MYX	Urban MYX	OPM MYX Countdown		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Complete Savages	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Friends	Will & Grace	The O.C.		Queer eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight Weekend		Who Wants To Marry My Dad 2	
Cinema One		Kundiman Ng Lahi				Antipolo Massacre				9 Mornings				Delia Maga Story				Kasangga Kahit Kailan	
Studio 23						Super Gals		Get Backers	Beyblade	Wazzup Wazzup	America's Next Top Model	Tru Calling		Charmed		News Central	The Next Joe Millionaire		Travel Time
AXN		Lost		30 Seconds To Fame	Mondo Magic	Hollywood's Greatest Stunts	E Buzz	The Associates		Boomtown		When Disasters Strike!		Fear Factor		CSI: Miami		CSI: Miami	
Star World	Weird TV	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	The King Of Queens	Still Standing	Yes Dear	Frasier	Boston Public		Friends	The King Of Queens
CNN		Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		Your World Today	
National Geographic		Built For The Kill		Totally Wild	Wildlife Diary	Be The Creature		Egypt Detectives: Mystery Of The First Egyptians	Africa From The Ground Up	Wow		About Asia		National Geographic Specials/When Animals Attack		Built For The Kill		Totally Wild/Animals Like Us Police/Medicine/Adoption/Tool Use	Wildlife Diary
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! True Hollywood Story		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Bars Maxwell Show	Modern Girl's Guide	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO								Bachelorman (6.10 PM)			Bulletproof (7.40 PM)			The First Wives Club			Nick Of Time (10.40PM)		
Star Movies		Man From Elysian Fields (3.10 PM)				Shakespeare In Love (4.55 PM)				All The Pretty Horses				Ever After: A Cinderella Story				Snow Falling On Cedars (11.05PM)	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Static Shock	What's New Scooby Doo?	Atomic Betty	Zoids Fusers	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Johnny Bravo	Time Squad	Thundercats	What's New Scooby Doo?	Atomic Betty
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	So Little Time	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Lion King II Simba's Pride			So Little Time	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Stuck In The Suburbs	
Cinemax	Orange County			The Trouble With Harry			Sherlock (5.45PM)				Relentless			The Addams Family			Stealing Candy (10.40PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Wife Swap		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	The Nanny	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Wife Swap					Just Cause (10.35PM)		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye (11.25PM)
Discovery Channel		Body Work		Mummy Autopsy		Mythbusters		Unsolved History						Wild Discovery		Disaster At The Death Coast		Building The Great Pyramid	
MTV Philippines			Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Get Spotted		TRL		Ask Rob Thomas	MTV Divas		D-tour	Taktakan	Punk'D	Rich Girls	On Board at MTV	Brand New	VH1 Video Collection	
Sports Plus						Memorial Tournament Highlights										Booz Allen Classic Final			

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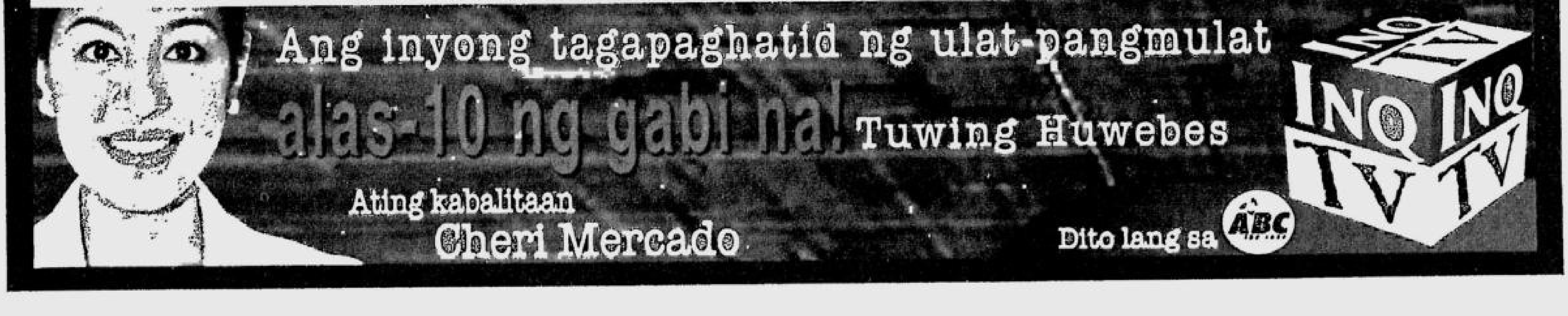

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ENTERTAINMENT

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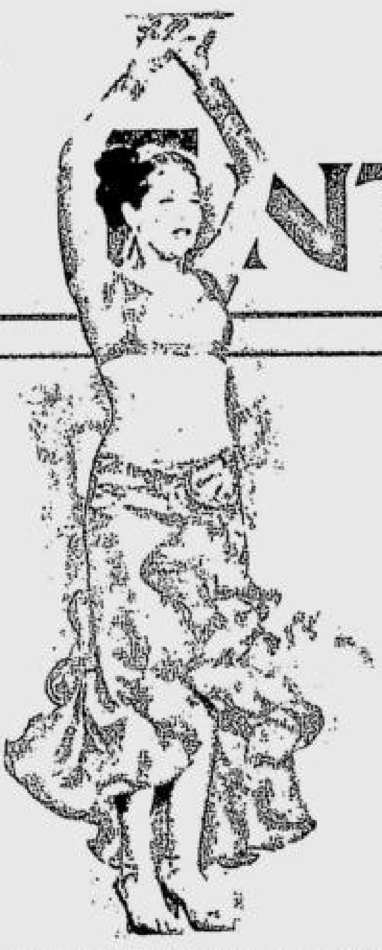

OLE!
Geneva Cruz's Latin number during the recent Urian Awards, we are told, was supposed to have been performed by Lucy Torres-Gomez, a serious student of flamenco. Did Gen measure up to the challenge? She got mixed reviews for the dance, but earned unanimous votes for Best Abs.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

GMA 7 exec says Goma is 'very professional'

By Marinel R. Cruz

LET THIS serve as a lesson, not only to him, but also to other actors and program hosts," GMA 7 senior vice president for TV entertainment Wilma Galvante said of the two-week suspension that the network imposed upon Richard Gomez, who was caught by the censors using "vulgar" words on television.

The actor was ordered to sit it out for the June 3 and 12 episodes of the talk show "S-Files," which he co-hosts, after the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board complained of his use of words with "double meaning" on the May 22 episode.

However, Galvante pointed out that Richard was "one of few very professional" show biz personalities.

"He speaks his mind, but he is never difficult to deal with," she said.

The suspension order came from "S-Files" program manager Jose Marie Barican, as con-

GMA 7/ A2-2

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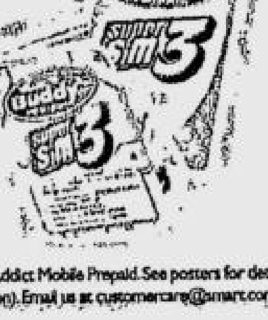

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2 STARWARS: EPISODE III 11:30FS/11:30MF/02:00/04:30/07:00 09:30LFS/09:30LMF/11:50END
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SHUTTER
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4 MR. & MRS. SMITH

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4 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR

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2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 A LOT LIKE LOVE
4 MR. & MRS. SMITH

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2 SHAOLIN VS EVIL
3 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
4 STARWARS: EPISODE III

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8 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR

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6 MR. & MRS. SMITH

sm city batangas
1 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 MR. & MRS. SMITH
4 UNLEASHED

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A gush fest with Katie Holmes

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—These are excerpts from the fun and fantastic conversation with **Katie Holmes** that we described yesterday in this column. It was punctuated with laughter, to say the least, so much so that we find it unnecessary to indicate in which parts we all had to pause to give way to the giggles and guffaws.

A gush fest it was with Katie using the word "amazing" at least nine times in reference to her superstar boyfriend **Tom Cruise.**

We are hearing these rumors that you are dating a famous actor.

It's not a rumor.

Has your life changed? Are there paparazzi hiding in the bushes?

I don't know if there are [but] my life has changed. I fell in love and I've never been happier. I'm so excited, so things are great. Things are amazing. I mean, he's incredible. I've never ever felt this way.

Tom is very comfortable showing his happiness and enthusiasm for this newfound love. Are you just as comfortable?

Yeah. I'm thrilled. I'm so happy. I mean, ask me anything. Let me have about five more minutes.

What makes Tom so great?

Oh, gosh. What? He's the most handsome man I've ever met. He's the most generous. He's the most artistic. He's the kindest, most thoughtful, the—you know, he's everything.

Are you now more interested in being the girlfriend or are you still going to vigorously pursue your career?

I'm so proud to be his woman. I'm so proud and I love acting. Things are amazing. This is a great, great wonderful life.

Tell us something about Katie Holmes before meeting Tom Cruise.

I feel like my life has just begun. That's how I feel. That's how it has changed and I've never been happier.

But why? What does he do for you?

I found my family. What does he do? He's amazing but Warner Brothers is going to be mad if I don't talk about "Batman."

They're used to it by now. So just go ahead and tell us, is he bright? Is he romantic?

He's yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes. He's romantic, he's bright, he makes me better, he's happy, he's loving, he's everything.

Your dream has come true. Are you going to get married? He already has children. You don't. To him, his religion is very important. How are you going to handle these issues?

We have to talk about that. The thought makes me smile. I'm so happy and we're having such a wonderful time. We're in love and it's just amazing.

Are you getting engaged?

I don't know. I mean, if I knew it wouldn't be a surprise, right?

What about his children and religion?

His children are such amazing people. They're just truly amazing and I've really enjoyed every moment with them. And ... his religion is really remarkable.

Tom has been expressing him-

NOT EVERYONE'

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and all that?

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1 MR.& MRS. SMITH MTRCB PG-13 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00
2 MR.& MRS. SMITH MTRCB PG-13 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
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3 MR. & MRS. SMITH 1:35, 4:35, 7:35, 10:30 PG-13
4 A LOT LIKE LOVE 12:30, 3:05, 5:40 8:15, 10:50 PG-13

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MR. AND MRS. SMITH PG13 2:00,4:50,7:40,10:30
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CINEMA 5 MR. & MRS. SMITH PG13 10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

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GMA 7 exec says G

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chair Marissa Laguardia.

Galvante told INQUIRER F
ment in an exclusive intervie
day: "MTRCB called our at
didn't even know that Richard
those things. We advise our t
to 'adlib' too much or resort t
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But I'd also like to note that th
show and [the hosts] some
carried away."

Just the same, she said, "
not let that pass. Part of self-r
is admonishing our talents."

Last year, Gomez's co-h
Marquez, was also prohibited
pearing on two episodes after
CB complained of his use of "
guage. Paolo Bediones and P
are the two other hosts of "S-F

Also last week, the MTRC
Boy Abunda and Kris Aquino
"The Buzz" on ABS-CBN, for u
tain language that violated th
guidance (PG) classification o
gram."

Talent manager

Meanwhile, Galvante said,
so network is busy handling th
of young artists from its tale
programs, like "StarStruck" a
Pop Superstar."

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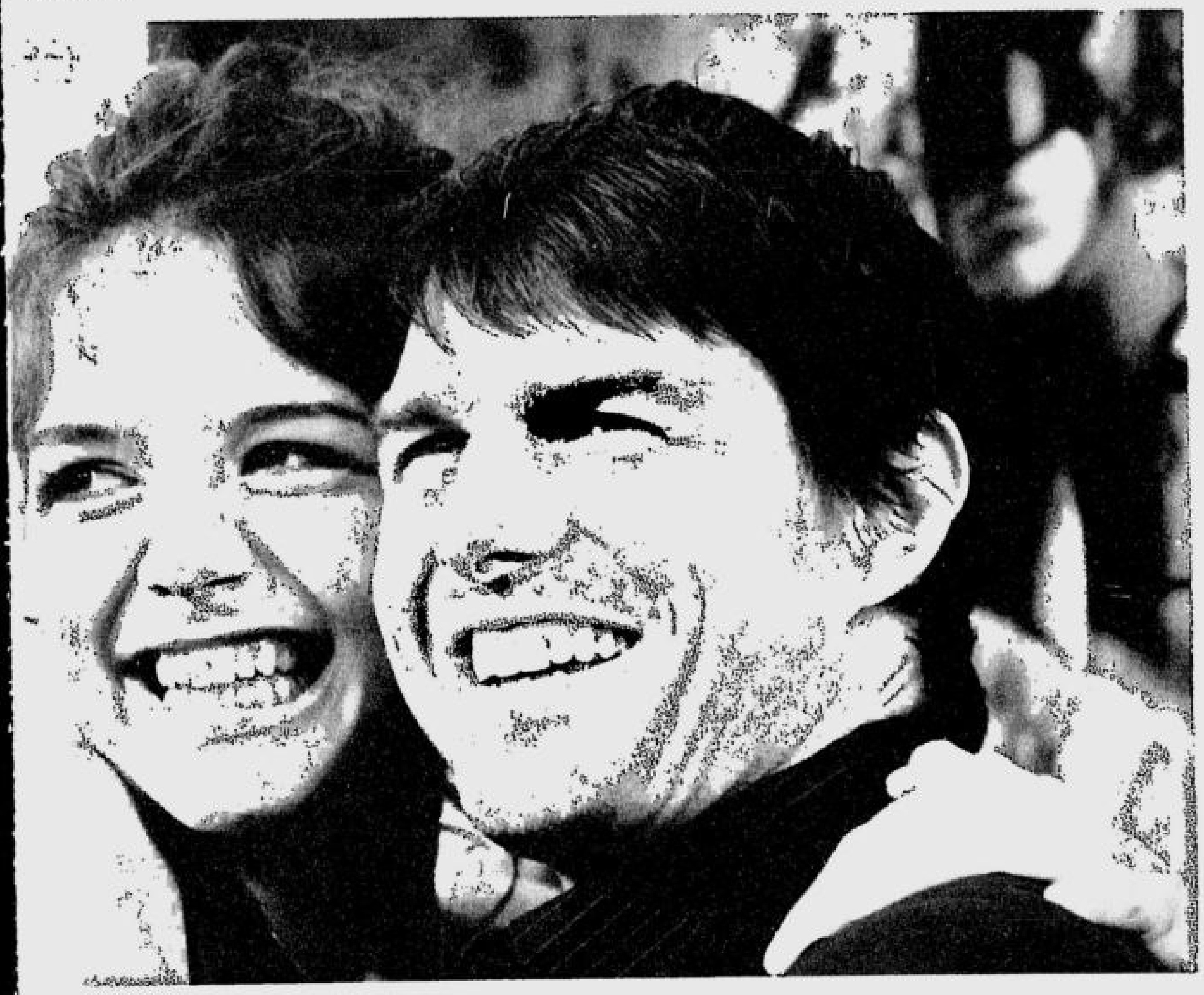

S buying the lovers bit, but how to argue with giddiness?

REUTERS

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us and they love him and he's my soul mate.

Now that you have Tom Cruise and Batman under your belt ...

Uh oh. It's getting hot in here.

Now that you have them in your life was what I meant. Do you really not notice the paparazzi?

I see them but they don't really concern me. It's fine. It's exciting. It's nice to have people take your picture. It means that you're doing well.

So it hasn't come to the point of annoyance?

No. I've always wanted to be an actress.

Last time we talked with Tom, he said he was looking for an adventurous woman. Have you always been adventurous or Tom encouraged you to be that way?

Tom has exposed me to new adventures, for sure. I've always been up for adventures. We just have such a great time. We've been scuba diving and motorcycle riding. It's just been so much fun. We'll probably be going mountain climbing. I don't know what he has in store but I'm excited. I'm up for anything.

Do we give you credit for changing Tom's attires, among other things? He always wore black shirt and black pants. He looks the same in our photos from one year to the next. Now, I have seen him in blue, green shirts. How did this happen?

Wow. Tom has always been the most handsome man in the whole world.

Tell him we like him in colors much better.

He looks amazing all the time, yeah.

Will you and Tom work together? How will you ensure that you don't lose your identity because Tom is larger than life?

I would be honored to work with Tom, obviously. He's extraordinary and I am so excited to be his lady and I am so happy.

But how do you make sure that you don't lose Katie Holmes?

I've only gotten better and happier since I've known him, so I feel so alive. I think I'm the best version of Katie when I'm with him.

Any chance that there might be a role for you in ... "Mission Impossible 3"?

My role is going to be ... to pull my chair right behind the monitor and watch and support my man.

What is the most romantic thing that Tom has done for you?

He's the most thoughtful person I've ever met. He remembers everything and he makes me feel loved every single day.

So who is going to design your wedding dress?

I think I have to be engaged first.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales@yahoo.com.

Tom's at it, too!

LOS ANGELES—Tom Cruise played to the crowd on "The Tonight Show" this week, jumping on Jay Leno's couch and pumping his arms as he mocked his exuberant display of affection for Katie Holmes on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" earlier.

Last month, the 42-year-old actor created a sensation on "Oprah" when he got down on his knees and repeatedly jumped on the host's couch, saying his love for Holmes was "beyond cool."

He told Leno: "When I start to think about her, things happen. So, cease talking."

A decidedly more subdued Cruise told Leno that he was looking forward to traveling, scuba diving and "spending the rest of my life" with Holmes.

"It's a thing that I wish for everyone," he said of being in love. "I like hearing good news ... I'm just really happy. She's a terrific lady, she's a great lady."

Tabloids have speculated the Cruise-Holmes coupling is designed to call attention to their upcoming movies. A Web site is selling items, including T-shirts, a trucker hat and mug, with the logo "Free Katie" for fans who aren't happy about the romance.

AP

A Movie A Day

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ON HBO this week, a number of movies bid fair to captivate viewers, and encourage them to watch a movie a day on cable TV:

Today, 2:10 p.m., "The Freshman." One of **Marlon Brando**'s last films, this generational drama stars **Matthew Broderick** as a college student who's conned out of his luggage and money. He's on the edge of depression when a chance encounter leads him to the hustler who robbed him.

Wanting to make amends, the hustler introduces Broderick to Carmine Sabatini (Brando), hoping for some much-needed employment. Despite Sabatini's questionable business credentials, he ends up becoming a mentor to Broderick, giving him the education of his life!

Tomorrow, 8 p.m., "Mona Lisa Smile." It's the 1950s, and progressive art history teacher Katherine Watson (**Julia Roberts**) is on a mission—to imbue Wellesley college girls with the ambition to live fulfilling lives. Expectedly, it turns out to be an uphill struggle.

June 15, 9:25 a.m., "And Starring Pancho Villa as Himself." Antonio Banderas plays Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa with gusto, flair and thespic range. In the HBO original movie presentation, a Hollywood film crew in 1914 follows Villa as he fights for Mexico's freedom—with complex historical and cinematic repercussions.

June 16, 5:30 p.m., "Biloxi Blues." Relive army boot camp, tyrannical officers and racial prejudice through the eyes of an aspiring writer (Matthew Broderick) called to military service in the waning months of World War II.

Based on Neil Simon's Tony Award-winning play, the movie is a comical and insightful scrutiny of young soldiers entering the war, poignantly told with a strikingly humorous edge.

June 17, 8:15 a.m., "Lady Jane." A compelling drama topbilling **Helena Bonham Carter**. Lady Jane Grey, a principled and precocious 15-year-old, becomes a pawn in the plot to maintain Protestant rule in the chaos after her cousin King Harry VIII's death.

An arranged marriage to Grilford Dudley (**Cary Elwes**) blossoms into love. Upon the death of Henry's weak son, Edward, Lady Jane assumes the throne. But the happiness of love cannot withstand the onslaught of power, which leads to the pair's ultimate downfall.

June 18, 5:30 p.m., "The Mambo Kings." Catch Antonio Banderas in his first English-speaking role, and experience the sensuality and vitality of Cuban music.

This film tells the story of two Cuban brothers who come to America with a suitcase full of songs, in search of a dream. On the way to stardom, they face hardships and make painful discoveries. **Armand Assante** also stars.

June 19, 8 p.m., "Top Gun." Navy pilot Pete Mitchell (**Tom Cruise**) is sent to a naval air station for advance training. When one of his friends dies, he's afraid that he may have lost his courage. But he gets a chance to prove himself on a crucial mission. With **Val Kilmer, Tim Robbins** and **Kelly McGillis.**

'The Human Mind'

Episode 2 of Discovery Channel's "The Human Mind" series will be telecast on June 14 at 8 p.m., with replays on June 15 at noon, and June 18 at 3 p.m.

The episode discusses what it is that makes us who we are, and uncovers the battle we face to master our emotions and control our behavior. Professor Robert Winston explores how our minds shape our personalities throughout our lives, and shows how personality traits like introversion and extroversion develop.

Viewers also find out how parents affect the personalities of their children, why teenagers are so emotionally sensitive, and what lies at the heart of characteristics like anger and mood swings in adults.

Pink Film Festival

Schedule of screenings of the ongoing Pink Film Festival at the UP Film Institute: June 14, 5 p.m., "American Pink." 7 p.m., Chuck and Buck." June 15, 5 p.m., "Bathhouse." 7 p.m., "Los Novios Bulgaros" (Bulgarian Lovers).

June 16, 7 p.m., "Inter.mates." June 17, 5 p.m., "The Films of Rosa ng Maynila." 7 p.m., "Los Novios Bulgaros." June 18, 5 p.m., "Mga Pusang Gala." 7 p.m., "So Happy Together."

June 19, 5 p.m., "Inter.mates." June 20, 5 p.m., "Pinoy Pinkies." 7 p.m., "Inter.mates." June 21, 7 p.m., "Euro Pink." June 22, 7 p.m., "Los Novios Bulgaros."

On Star Movies

June 19, 9 p.m., "The Statement." A powerful political thriller directed by Norman Jewison, about Pierre Brossand (**Michael Caine**), who as a young man, was a war criminal. Now, 50 years later, Brossand's security is being threatened. A new investigation launched by an ambitious judge (**Tilda Swinton**) is seeking to unearth Brossand's hidden whereabouts. Meanwhile, assassins are tracking Brossand, bent on killing him before the investigation can bring him to justice.

June 20, 9 p.m., "She's the One." A pair of brothers try to work out the kinks in their relationships with their wives, mistresses and each other. A charming romantic comedy directed by **Edward Burton**, co-produced by **Robert Redford**, and starring **Jennifer Aniston, Edward Burns** and **Cameron Diaz.**

oma is 'very professional'

From page A2-1

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"After a season of 'StarStruck,' which lasts for 16 weeks, you have 14 new, popular talents," Galvante said. "And since they've undergone workshops, we already know they are worthy, so we sign them up immediately."

Talent contracts are created to "protect" an artist and the network from each other, Galvante explained.

She pointed out: "There'll always be talents who will try to violate contracts ... and people who will tempt talents to do that."

Case in point

Earlier, actress Bianca King, last seen on the hit *fanta-serye* "Mulawin," appeared on "The Buzz" and announced that she had left GMA 7. Bianca said she had been dropped from the cast of upcoming action-adventure series "Sugo."

Her statements were taken as an expression of interest in moving to the rival network.

"I can't spend all my time trying to stop these things from happening," Galvante said. "[Besides] it's the network that determines what a talent can offer the network, what the network can offer him in turn, and what he has achieved so far. Then we decide whether we want this talent to stay, or we should let him go."

WILMA Galvante

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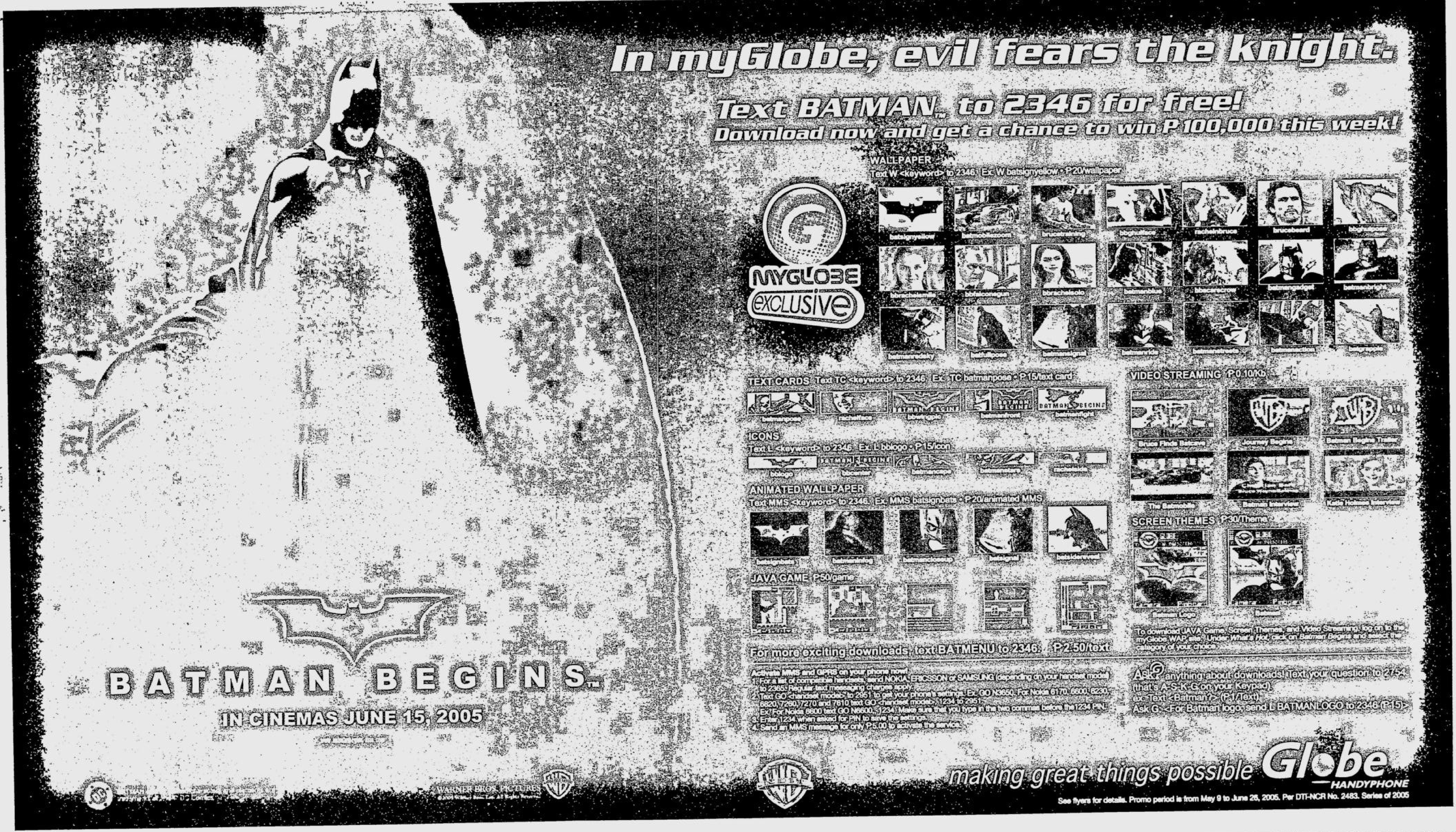
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3. Enter 1234 when asked for PIN to save the settings.
4. Send an MMS message for only P5.00 to activate the service.

AskG anything about downloads! Text your question to 2754 (that's A-S-K-G on your Keypad).
ex. Text <Batman?> (P1/Text)
Ask G: <For Batman logo, send L BATMANLOGO to 2346 (P15)>

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MONDAY,
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

BUSINESS

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A STOCK market trader gives a thumbs down and symbolically slits his throat at the Philippines Stock Exchange in Manila. Philippine share prices closed 2.82 percent lower as the market reeled for a third straight day from political uncertainties amid talk of a possible attempt to oust President Arroyo, dealers said.

AFP/JAY DIRECTO

Big Japan firms eye RP mining projects

By Clarissa S. Batino

AT LEAST eight big Japanese companies and financial institutions are planning to cash in on the Philippines' booming mining sector, particularly in the copper and nickel sectors, according to government and private sector officials.

The companies include Pan Pacific Copper Co., Mitsubishi Corp., Sojitz Corp., Sumitomo Metal Mining Co., and Marubeni Corp., said Chambers of Mines of the Philippines president Benjamin Philip Romualdez.

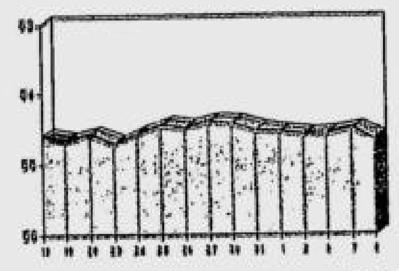
Financial groups like Mizuho Corporate Bank, Mitsui Bank and even the Japan Bank for International Cooperation have also expressed interest to participate in mining ventures by providing debt or equity to viable projects, he added.

The head of the mining chamber said the Japanese companies would finalize their invest

BIG/B7

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



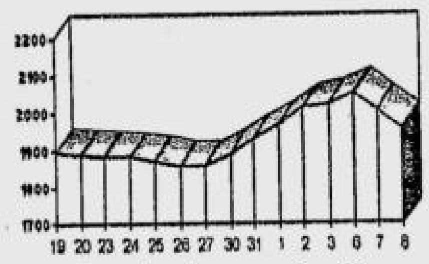
P 55.200= $ 1
As of 5 p.m., June 10, 2005

¥ 107.44 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., June 10, 2005

GOLD: $422.90-423.40
As of 5 p.m., June 10, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Volatile trading seen

STOCK prices will continue to be volatile this week as the Arroyo administration remains under fire for alleged election fraud and involvement of her husband and son in illegal gambling activities, analysts said.

They said that rumors of a coup plot would further weigh on the market.

Showing the scars of last week, the main index lost 85.31 points or 4.2 percent to close at 1937.18.

Jose Mari Lacson, analyst at CitisecOnline.Com Phils., said that the jueteng and election fraud scandals should not affect how the economy and fiscal picture would fare since the Philippines now had access to credit compared to the country's financial standing in 2001 when the country faced huge maturing debts and suffered from a deteriorating fiscal performance.

Lacson added that the latest upgrade by international credit agency Fitch Ratings, which improved its outlook on the country following the passage of key tax measures by Congress, was proof that the government was addressing its fiscal problem.

He said that attempts to impeach President Arroyo or another People's Power to replace the administration was not likely to happen.

STOCKS/B2

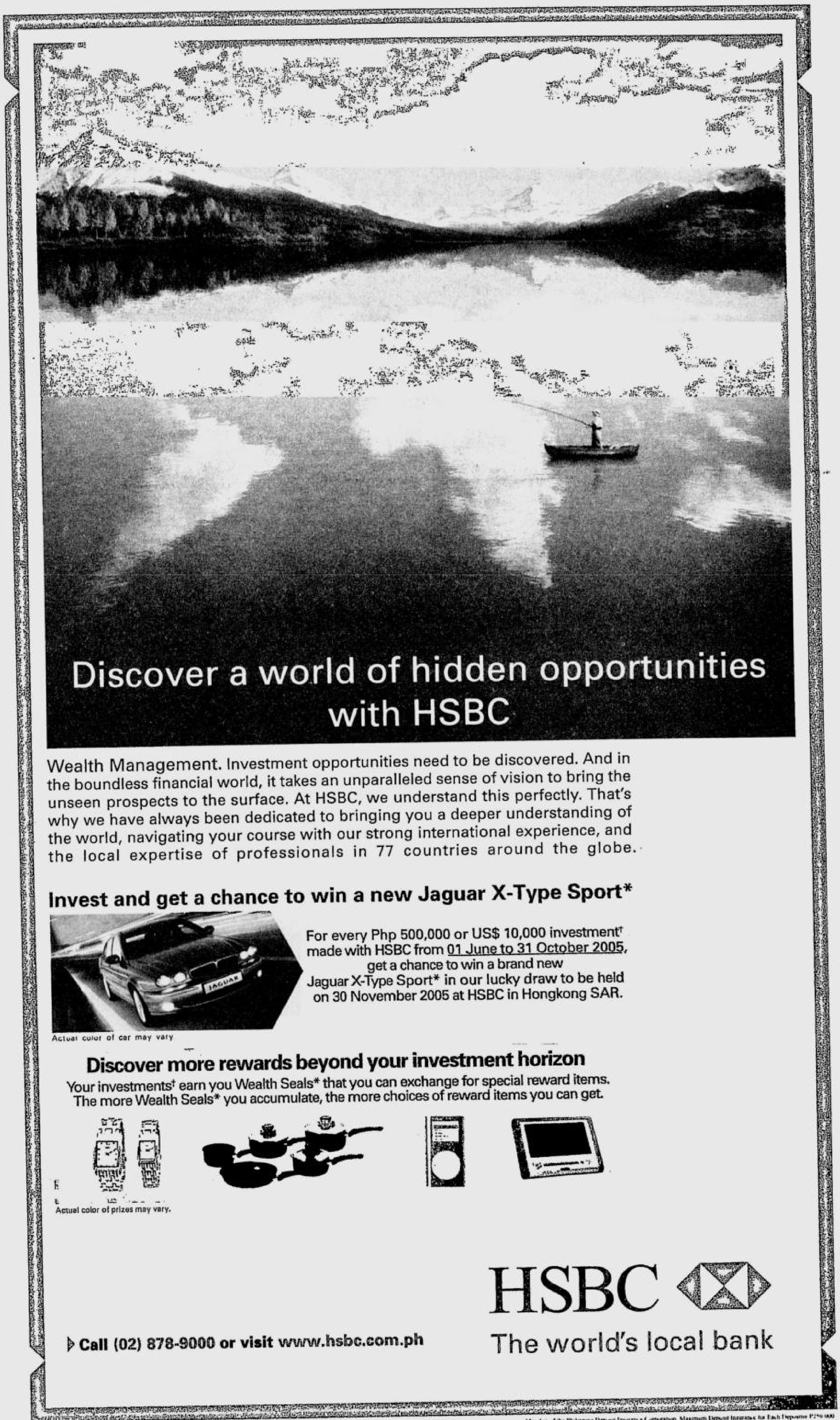
WHAT'S INSIDE

Palace wants to revise VAT law to appease traders /B8

NO FREE LUNCH
Municipal bonds, anyone? /B2

Banks' bad loans down to 11.3% of portfolio /B6

5-mo BOI-registered investments down 21.4% /B7



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Municipal bonds, anyone?

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

WHAT do the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and the Taipei 101 Tower—currently the tallest building in the world—have in common? Answer: These world landmarks have been financed wholly or partly by municipal bonds.

In the Philippines, provincial, city and municipal governments are only beginning to discover the usefulness of floating bonds to fund their various infrastructure projects, particularly income generating ones. And yet, local government bonds have been around for centuries in other countries. In the United States and other mature economies, municipal bonds account for a substantial portion of all bond issuances in their capital markets. In the US, about $420 billion worth of municipal bonds were issued last year, and a total of $2.1 trillion were outstanding and actively circulating.

What they are

Municipal bonds or "munis" are debt securities that local government units (LGUs) issue to raise money for public projects, such as public markets, fish ports, bus terminals, hospitals, low cost housing and other special projects. When you buy a municipal bond, you are lending money to the LGU that issued the bond. In exchange, the borrowing LGU promises to pay you a specified amount of interest, usually semiannually, and return your money, also known as "principal," on a specified maturity date. Municipal bonds issued in the Philippines have had maturities up to seven years.

Among our better-known municipal bond-financed projects is the Caticlan Jetty Port, familiar to anyone who has been to the resort island of Boracay in recent years. The province of Aklan floated P40 million of bonds in 1999 to build this facility, and continues to service the debt today. More recent municipal bond floats have been much bigger, including those for Tagaytay City's P220-million convention center and Antipolo City's P400-million commercial complex.

Alternative modes

There are two other ways that an LGU may fund a project other than using its internal revenue allotment (IRA) from the national government or locally generated revenues, especially from real property taxes and local business taxes. The LGU may secure a loan from a government financial institution (GFI) like the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), Land Bank, or Philippine National Bank. For the GFI, the loan is virtually risk-free as the LGU's IRA normally becomes direct collateral for the loan, which means that in the event of default, the GFI can intercept the borrower LGU's IRA from DBM.

The other way is for the LGU to go via the build-operate-transfer (BOT) mode, whereby a private firm constructs the facility and is given the right to operate it and collect user fees until it is able to recover its investment and a reasonable profit. Each financing mode—whether bonds, GFI loans or BOT—has its own advantages and disadvantages, and which one would be most appropriate depends on circumstances and the nature of the projects to be financed.

Deeper capital markets

One of the advantages of bond financing is the way it helps widen and deepen the capital markets. In particular, it expands the range of choices of investment instruments available to savers/investors. For one thing, municipal bonds can help channel OFW remittances and rural savings towards development of the localities where their families reside, thereby giving them a direct stake and involvement in improving their communities. Tagaytay City specifically allotted a portion of the bond float for its convention center to small savers, thereby enabling its citizens to have a direct stake in the facility.

Elsewhere, municipal bonds are a popular investment instrument for small and large savers alike, especially because their earnings are usually tax exempt. Such tax exemption is necessary to offset the added transaction costs (underwriting fees, guarantee fees and other costs) associated with floating a local bond as against simply taking a GFI loan. Without such exemption, LGUs are likely to favor bank loans, and investors would have little incentive to buy the bonds over alternative interest-earning assets like T-bills and trust accounts. Thus, the main buyers for our municipal bonds so far have been the big banks themselves, making the bond issues no different from a syndicated loan to the LGU. Furthermore, many of the bond flotations are being prepaid before maturity by the issuing LGUs and converted to loans by GFIs, who are happy to push more loans with risk-free clients such as LGUs. But such practice undermines the capital market-deepening effect of municipal bonds.

Wanted: a clear policy

In reality, there is still no explicit government policy to promote LGU bond financing. For the reasons described above, there should be. This requires that the usual tax exemptions be granted on LGU bond earnings. It also requires that there be a good credit rating system for LGUs, and a good LGU credit guarantee mechanism in place. Both are already being partly fulfilled by the LGU Guarantee Corp., but needs further expansion to widen its scope and coverage. And for LGU bonds to be instrumental in deepening our capital markets, we need to have a well-working fixed income exchange, i.e. the counterpart of a stock market for trading fixed-income assets like bonds. We have taken baby steps in these directions; it is time to make greater strides so that through better local resource mobilization, we can help ease the fiscal bind the national government is in.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 10, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	32	31.5	32	148,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	47	49	47	48.5	1,873,800
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.61	0.62	0.6	0.61	1,020,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	49.5	47.5	48	182,800
International Exch. Bank	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	20,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	32	30	31	709,900
Philippine National Bank	33	34	33	34	226,200
Phil. Savings Bank	32	32	32	32	1,500
Security Bank Corp.	27	27	27	27	25,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	28	27.5	28	117,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	262.5	265	231	265	250
Manulife Financial Corp.	2570	2580	2570	2575	570
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1,394,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1720	1740	1710	1740	1,340
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	21,200
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.06	1.12	1.06	1.1	1,810,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	2.2	2.2	2	2	12,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	835	795	830	29,610
Ipeople Inc.	3.45	3.45	3.3	3.3	37,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,800,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	43,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.25	3.15	3.2	5,204,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1560	1565	1535	1535	194,430
Ivantage Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	1,180,000
Philweb Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.017	0.018	52,700,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.25	16	15.25	15.5	16,800
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	24.25	23.5	24	469,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.5	9,583,000
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.05	3.1	4,816,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	320,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	1,165,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	120,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	22,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.58	0.61	0.58	0.59	760,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.45	3.55	3.35	3.4	2,528,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	353,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	80,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	33	33	33	33	100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	30.5	28.5	30.5	2,082,400
RFM Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58	58	57.5	58	30,000
San Miguel Corp. B	89	89	89	89	19,000
Universal Robina Corp.	16	16	16	16	264,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,960,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	16,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	31,000,000
Ayala Corp.	340	350	340	347.5	101,100
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.95	4.8	4.95	3,228,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	7,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.94	1.96	238,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	10,000,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.16	3,860,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.1	1.1	29,393,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	540,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	150,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.29	0.32	0.29	0.32	10,600,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.65	2.55	2.6	1,345,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.5	817,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	48.5	48.5	47.5	47.5	364,200
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0875	0.0875	0.085	0.0875	900,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	230,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.45	734,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.38	1.42	1.38	1.4	10,715,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.36	33,600,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	470,000
SM Investments Corp.	255	255	252.5	255	629,760
South China Resources Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.19	13,640,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	1,680,000
Zeus Holdings Inc	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.24	1.3	1.24	1.3	35,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	300,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHERS					
Belle Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.12	1.12	5,112,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	30,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	2,030,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	5,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR).	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	1,702,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series C	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series J	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series K	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	2,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.7	8	7.7	7.9	12,024,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.92	0.94	0.91	0.93	480,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,980,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	7,500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.48	1.44	1.48	6,791,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.25	0.25	0.23	0.23	1,120,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	20,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.55	4.55	71,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.7	8	7.7	7.9	9,709,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	5,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.5	1,662,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3	3	3	3	5,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.33	21,120,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.34	26,370,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	47,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	39,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.006	296,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.94	0.94	0.92	0.92	920,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.04	3,677,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	212,900
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	190,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	19,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	40,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	6,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	42,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	6,710,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	500,000

CURRENCIES

June 12, 2005

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.817929	1.000000	54.8590
Japan	Yen	0.007616	0.009311	0.5108
United Kingdom	Pound	1.489612	1.821200	99.9092
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105129	0.128531	7.0511
Switzerland	Franc	0.651736	0.796813	43.7124
Canada	Dollar	0.650959	0.795862	43.6602
Singapore	Dollar	0.491514	0.600925	32.9661
Australia	Dollar	0.627680	0.767401	42.0989
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.169630	2.652590	145.5184
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218115	0.266667	14.6291
Brunei	Dollar	0.490042	0.599125	32.8674
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000104	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020136	0.024618	1.3505
UAE	Dirham	0.222705	0.272279	14.9370
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.222600	67.0706
Argentina	Peso	0.282531	0.345423	18.9496
Brazil	Real	0.328684	0.401849	22.0450
Denmark	Kroner	0.134340	0.164244	9.0103
India	Rupee	0.018816	0.023004	1.2620
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215273	0.263193	14.4385
Mexico	New Peso	0.075191	0.091929	5.0431
New Zealand	Dollar	0.582280	0.711896	39.0539
Norway	Kroner	0.126570	0.154744	8.4891
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013724	0.016779	0.9205
South Africa	Rand	0.121607	0.148677	8.1563
Korea	Won	0.000815	0.000997	0.0547
Syria	Pound	0.015757	0.019264	1.0568
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026140	0.031959	1.7532

Volatile trading seen

From page B1

"First there is no smoking gun yet. The opposition has to establish a direct link between jueteng and the executive department. They also have yet to prove election fraud. Second, the middle income class is the key to a successful revolution. I don't think their support is there. Third, nobody wants to go through another People Power. Our experiences have shown that it is not the best way to effect changes in the government and weed out corruption," he said.

Apart from domestic troubles, Lacson said liquidity might still be tight with an expected quarter percentage-point increase in key interest rates in the upcoming US Federal Open Market Committee meeting before the end of the month.

BPI Trade said in a weekly report that some investors adopted the contrarian stance and took advantage of the low prices by the end of last week to buy bargain stocks, betting that the Arroyo administration would weather the current political storm.

"Given the political uncertainties, investors will continue to adopt a wait-and-see attitude until the issues settle down," BPI Trade said. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Analyst expects BSP to raise policy rates

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas may have to raise its key overnight rates by another 75 basis points in the next 12 months as capital inflows start shrinking, an analyst from Deutsche Bank said.

Michael Spencer, who is based in Hong Kong, said in a commentary dated June 9 that the increase in the BSP's policy rates would be prompted not by rising inflation but by narrowing differentials between local and foreign interest rates that could make peso-denominated assets less attractive.

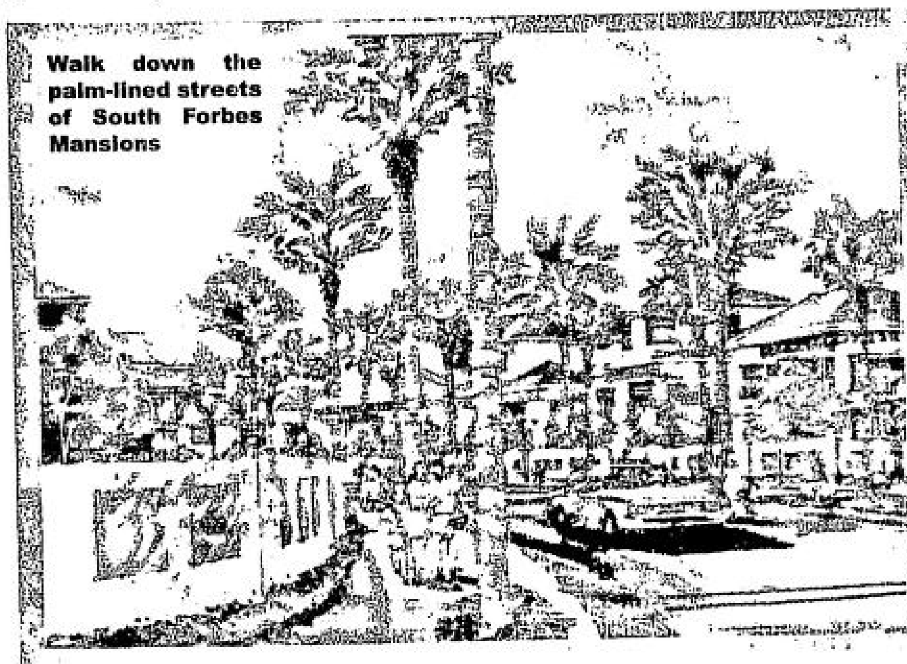
"As Congress passed surprisingly large tax hikes and the (government's fiscal) deficit fell, the risk premium required to hold peso-denominated securities fell too," Spencer said.

This favorable development has led to large capital inflows which pushed the peso stronger in the first quarter, he noted.

"However, we expect this rebalancing is nearing an end and as the (US) Federal Reserve raises (its rates) further, the BSP will see capital inflows weaken as the in-

ANALYST/ B7

Walk down the palm-lined streets of South Forbes Mansions



Experience the Luxe Lifestyle in One Location

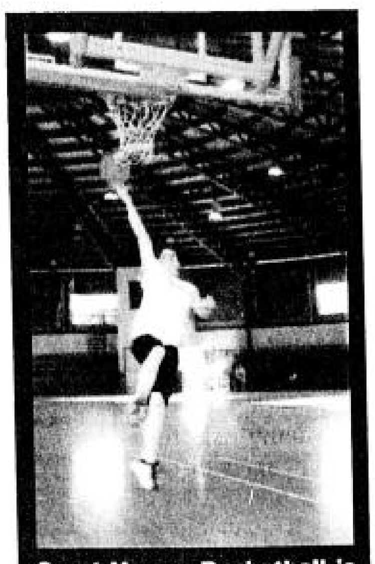
Over the past decade, the Filipino's taste in choosing a place to call home has evolved dramatically. He's always looking for the definitive plus that will make the investment worth the buy. Thus, real estate developments had to go beyond the "location, location, location" principle to offering "location, luxury, and lifestyle."

Location addresses a resident's concerns such as proximity to work, the mall, schools, and hospitals. Luxury is the availability of top amenities such as a clubhouse, pools, and sports facilities. A natural environment and prime destinations such as restaurant rows, plush hotels, and fashion shops further define a family's lifestyle.

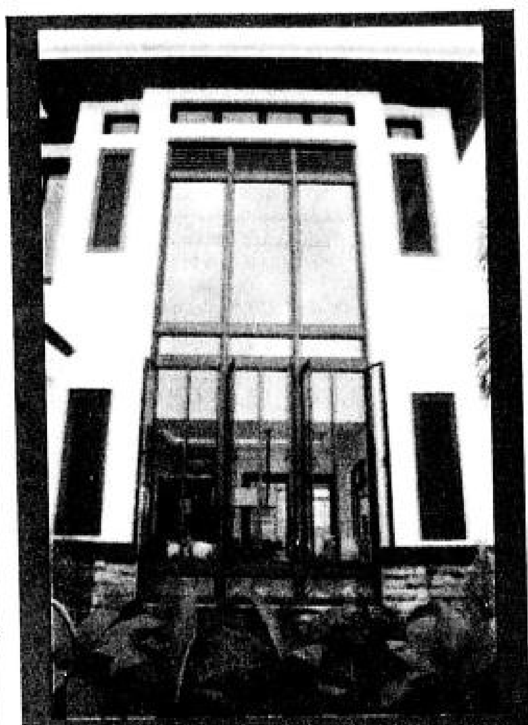
One development that combines all three elements into the ideal address is the 250-hectare South Forbes Golf City. Conceptualized by leading developer Cathay Land and set to rise within the booming Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay growth area, South Forbes is a self-sustaining city that will house prime office buildings and cyberparks. Its proximity to the industrial parks of Sta. Rosa makes it a top investment priority. It is also near Walter Mart and Pasco De Sta. Rosa; top schools such as Ateneo, La Salle, and St. Scholastica's; and health institutions such as Asian Hospital in Alabang.

Families will experience luxury everyday at the South Forbes Mansions, the City's main residential cluster. The Mansions offers generous lot cuts and spacious homes inspired by the laid-back atmosphere of Bali. The resort-type exteriors are matched by the warm, inviting interiors and wide windows.

Consistent with the Asian theme, the Mansions clubhouse offers luxurious resort-type amenities. Tropical landscaping accented by water and rock formations welcomes guests and residents at the clubhouse's main entrance gate. Guests can allow time to pass by leisurely at the lap pool, basketball court, and children's playground.



Sport Haven: Basketball is just one sport one can enjoy within five minutes from one's home at South Forbes, aside from swimming, badminton, tennis, and golf.



Wide Windows: The floor-to-ceiling windows of the Bali Mansions Coralia model unit give grand views of the neighborhood.

Family lifestyles will continue to improve and mature at South Forbes. Restaurant rows offering the best of modern cuisines, quaint shops offering fashion accessories and sporting gadgets, and coffee shops serving the finest caffeine concoctions will rise along the City's main commercial avenue. Day and night, neighbors, executives, and students will interact and strengthen community ties at the South Forbes Strip.

For the more discriminating set, a posh hotel will be developed to serve tourists who are out for a weekend of business and pleasure. A convention center will cater to the exhibition space and seminar needs of the numerous multi-national companies in the technoparks. The hotel and convention center will be managed by Astoria Plaza Suites.

The luxurious game of golf is another sport-lifestyle that families will enjoy. Of the City's total land area of 250 hectares, about a third has been earmarked for the South Forbes Golf and Leisure Club. The long distance between holes, combined with the elevation changes, will challenge any avid golfer's skills while providing convenience to new players. Best of all, a Mansions lot purchase comes with a complementary, exclusive membership to the Golf Club.

Truly, South Forbes Golf City is the top choice for discerning couples and retirees who want the best out of life, at a good price. A free trip to the site can be easily arranged at (02) 635-8108 or (02) 636-4647 and log on to www.cathaylandinc.com.

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Moratorium on creation of new gov't units urged

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance wants a moratorium on the creation of new government agencies, stressing that the government's volatile fiscal situation actually calls for the downsizing of the bureaucracy.

Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said government should focus on rationalizing the functions of existing government agencies, which he said could even make public service more efficient.

"We should stop creating new agencies ... We do not support the creation of a new government entity to perform functions already mandated to existing government agencies," Purisima said in a statement.

The finance chief was commenting on the proposal in Congress to create the so-called Solar Development Research Authority (SDRA), which would be tasked to explore ways of generating new sources of energy, such as solar power.

The proposal, embodied in House Bill No. 1494, is meant to help trim down the high cost of power in the country. The cost of electricity in the Philippines is said to be the second highest in Asia after industrialized Japan.

But Purisima said that the function of the proposed SDRA also happens to be the mandate of the Energy Utilization Management Bureau, an attached agency of the Department of Energy. Creating a separate entity for research and development for solar development would therefore only create redundancy, he said.

"The DOF acknowledges the importance of research and development in the area of science and technology for the progress of our nation ... (but) we believe we are better off working with the DOE and the private sector," he said.

The DOF, together with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), have undertaken a study on the need to rationalize, streamline, or possibly dissolve any or some of 15 selected government-owned and –controlled corporations (GOCCs) that are said to have become financial burdens to the government.

The DOF and the DBM said state-owned firms, whose functions the government could do away with, should be abolished or rationalized to keep from aggravating the fragile fiscal situation of the government.

Aside from state-owned firms, the government is likewise embarking on a rationalization program for the national government.

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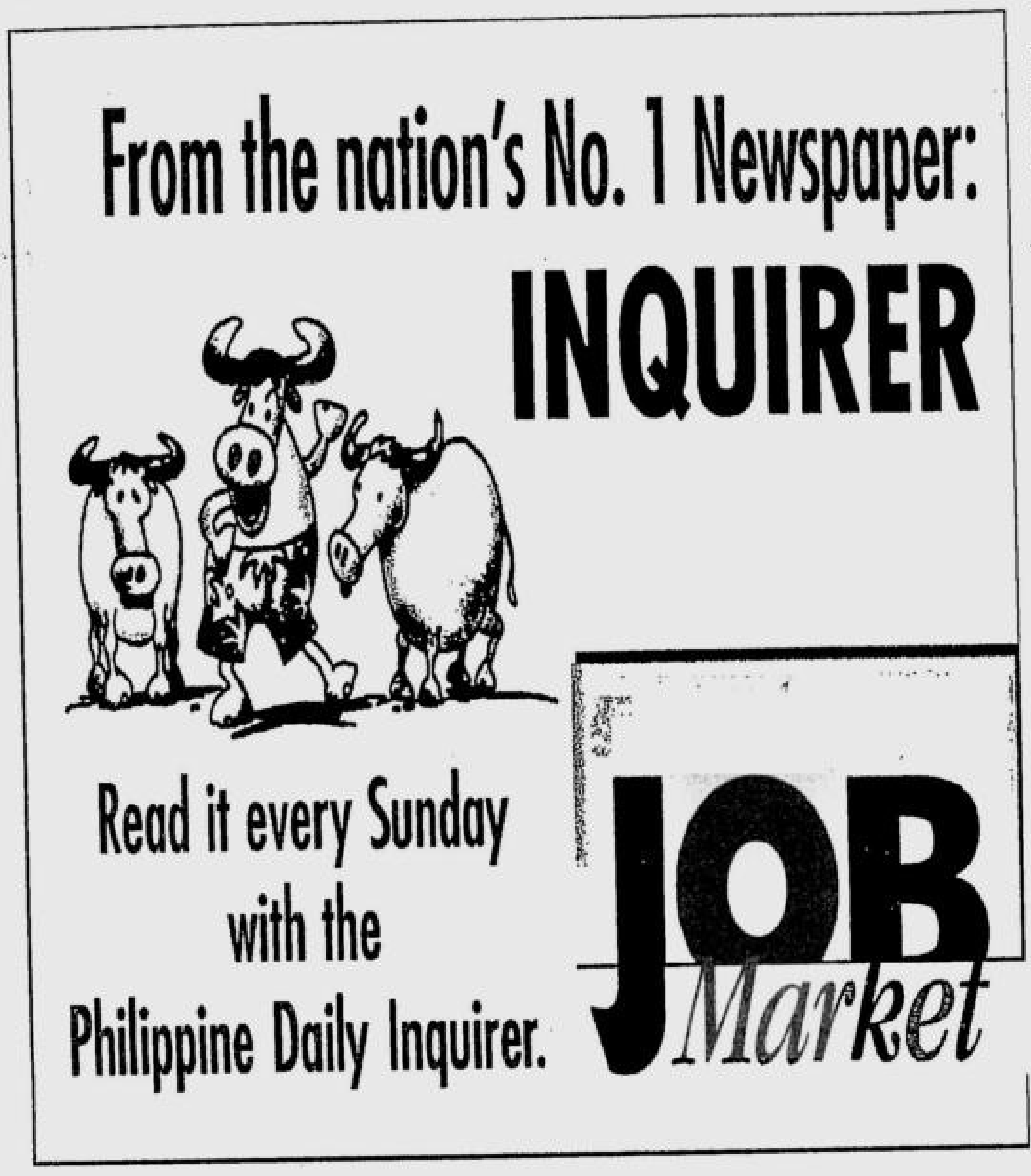
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JOB Market

Pre-need firm seen to revive talks with North American investor

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED giant College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) may revive talks with a multinational marketing firm based in North America which is said to be interested in investing $100 million in the troubled firm, according to sources.

But without a dealer's license, CAP may have a hard time convincing the North American investor to revive its interest in CAP, sources added.

CAP's license to sell education plans was suspended last year as it grappled with regulatory requirements to increase its capital and ensure that its trust fund was intact to meet payments for maturing plans in the next few years.

Sources added that CAP director Robert Sobrepreña was in the United States working out the requirements that would open the way for CAP's new investor to infuse $12.5 million in the troubled pre-need firm.

CAP is expecting an equity infusion worth $12.5 million from Zurich firm International Global Capital Holdings AG (IGCH) within the month after its trustee bank, the Philippine Veterans Bank, issued an asset safe-keeping receipt or proof of CAP's assets to IGCH's bank Credit Suisse last May 11.

The ASKR issuance was communicated to Credit Suisse last May 16.

The Securities and Exchange Commission expects CAP to come in with fresh capital before the end of the month.

SEC chair Fe Barin however said that the SEC has not given any ultimatum to CAP.

"There is no sense for a deadline because if they do not have the liquidity, the plan holders will be up in arms again," Barin said. "They will have to be answerable to the public."

Barin hinted however that the Commission en banc is preparing to discuss this week the recommendations of SEC's oversight committee to take over the pre-need firm.

"After so many weeks, maybe the commission will be prepared to take up the recommendations of the oversight committee," Barin said.

The SEC's oversight committee earlier filed its terminal report on CAP.

In its terminal report, the oversight committee recommended that the Commission appoint a full time management committee for CAP, the Comprehensive Annuity Plans & Pension Corp., and, if possible, all other affiliates of CAP, such as CAP Health, to replace CAP's existing board of directors.

The committee found that CAP has turned to its affiliates for its liquidity requirements. The oversight committee thus expanded its recommendation to include the affiliates under a proposed mancom. A mancom will be tasked to manage the assets of the company, secure and preserve the records of the company, study the viability of continuing CAP's business, and cushion the impact of CAP's financial problem on plan holders.

CAP said that its trust fund, or the pool of assets that guarantee payment of liabilities to plan holders, stood at P8.5 billion as of January.

CAP has 780,000 planholders.

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No wood, no business

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

THE FURNITURE industry is one of the strongest industries in the export market. With 15,000 companies—95 percent of which are micro, small and medium entrepreneurs—the industry employs nearly 800,000 workers plus one million more in the sub-contracting network, bringing in close to US$600 million through its domestic and export markets.

Export Sales Report from January-March 2005 would show an increase of 37.63 percent from US$91.02 million in 2004 to US$125.27 million in the same period of 2005.

Nick de Lange, chair of the Chamber of the Furniture Industries of the Philippines, said in his report during the May 2005 Meeting of the Export Development Council that wood and other forest based products account for 80 percent of the materials used by the industry, majority of which is sourced locally.

The four typhoons that wreaked havoc on Quezon, Aurora, Nueva Ecija and other places in Luzon in the last quarter of 2004 had caused millions of pesos worth of damage to property and forest based products. Thousands of lives were also lost during the tragedy.

Mindanao's wood industry

As a response, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered a total log ban. Illegal logging activities in the devastated areas was identified as the culprit. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was given 30 days to review and evaluate forest tenure instrument and to submit a list of illegal loggers.

As a result, the wood inventories of wood producers, furniture makers and wood dependent industries are drying up and prices of timber and timber products are skyrocketing.

Worst of all, people are losing their jobs.

The wood industry is one of seven major focus industries of Region XI in Mindanao. Region XI has a total forest land of 1,181,672 hectares—66 percent of which are considered to be production forest, while the remaining 34 percent are protected forest. There are 62 existing wood processing plants with a log requirement of 462,000 metric tons. Plantation forest, both government and private, covers 231,898 hectares. The community based forest management (CBFM) areas cover about 11,615 hectares with 112,193 families/beneficiaries.

CARAGA's natural resource potential is its vast area of forest land, comprising 22 percent of its total land area. Thus, this region is known as the timber corridor of Mindanao.

It was in Butuan City, that the President herself announced the lifting of the total log ban in Mindanao. The areas covered are Region 11 (Davao Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte) and CARAGA (Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte).

Region 11 has 100,000 hectares of forest covered by logging permits, while CARAGA has 150,000 hectares.

Need for new processing centers

But despite the lifting of the ban, actual timber harvests have yet to resume because compliance checks on permit holders have been made a pre-condition for the resumption of their operations.

This is made more difficult because of the additional bureaucratic requirements before clearance to harvest can be given. Add to this is the DENR's apparent lack of manpower and logistics, which has been contributing to the delay.

The situation, if not remedied, will impact not only the wood processing industry, but the entire export industry of the region, particularly the Cavendish Bananas sector which accounts for over 65 percent of total export revenue.

The Cavendish banana growers are dependent on the gemelina and other planted species for their wooden pallet requirement. The situation is, "no wooden pallet, no banana export."

The continued implementation of MC 2003-14, the Moratorium on the Issuance of New Wood Processing Plants issued by former DENR Sec. Elisea Gozun in July 2003, has barred the entry of new wood investment projects in Mindanao.

The DENR's Five-Year Mini Saw Mill Rationalization Study in 2004 showed that Davao's log production was about 1.4 million metric tons, while the wood processing requirements is at 462,000 metric tons. This means a buffer of 926,000 metric tons which, according to the DENR, would allow the establishments of new or additional wood processing plants.

The region has the capacity to absorb new processing centers and, because of this, the Regional Development Council of Region XI has issued a resolution urging the DENR to exempt the region from this order.

These new wood processing centers would mean more jobs for our people.

More problems ahead

One of the biggest obstacles due to this recent development is the stringent implementation of policies related to the transport and shipment of wood products.

While stringent implementation of the law is being welcomed by the wood industry as a way of protecting the forests, this should not be a hindrance to those operating legally.

Inspection procedures and issuances of documents are causing much delay in the delivery and export shipments. This is crucial especially for exporters of finished wood products who have to meet delivery deadlines.

Supply lines are hampered by checkpoints, or "cash points," as law enforcers are ignorant of DENR memoranda issuances. Minor forest products and even finished ones have been stopped along the highways.

The Mindanao Wood and Furniture Sector is asking for clear cut, well-rationalized guidelines regarding inspection and shipment procedures so as to minimize, if not totally avoid, corruption and other forms of "red tapes" that serve to increase the cost of doing business.

(Joji Ilagan-Bian is a strong advocate for Mindanao; member, Export Development Council and former chair of the Mindanao Business Council. Vice chair of the Mindanao Commission of Women and National Corn Board; chair of the Mindanao TVET. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

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DOF starts checking out credit, financial standing of gov't units

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has begun scrutinizing the financial capabilities and credit standing of local government units (LGUs), in an effort to improve the fiscal health of the public sector.

The Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF), a unit of the DOF that monitors the LGUs, has created a database on the financial standing and credit transactions undertaken by LGUs nationwide. The database will be used in examining the financial muscle of LGUs, the BLGF said.

"We are now analyzing the credit capabilities of LGUs to make sure they do not spend most of their income on credit servicing," said Presentacion Montesa, BLGF director. "We assist LGUs in making them financially viable."

The move to apply stricter measures in monitoring the income and spending of LGUs would enable the government units to be less financially dependent on the national government, which is currently in the grip of a fiscal problem.

Montesa said during a briefing over the weekend that the BLGF has begun requiring LGUs to submit their annual investments plan, annual budget, and periodic income statements so that her office could analyze what needs to be done to check whether they are exercising fiscal discipline and to improve their financial standing.

Montesa said BLGF was now taking full advantage of its agreement with government financial institutions (GFIs) on information sharing regarding the financial standing of LGUs. She said many LGUs source loans from GFIs to finance projects, such as those related to infrastructure development.

There are 1,695 LGUs nationwide, of which 1,500 are municipalities, 116 are cities, and 79 are provinces.

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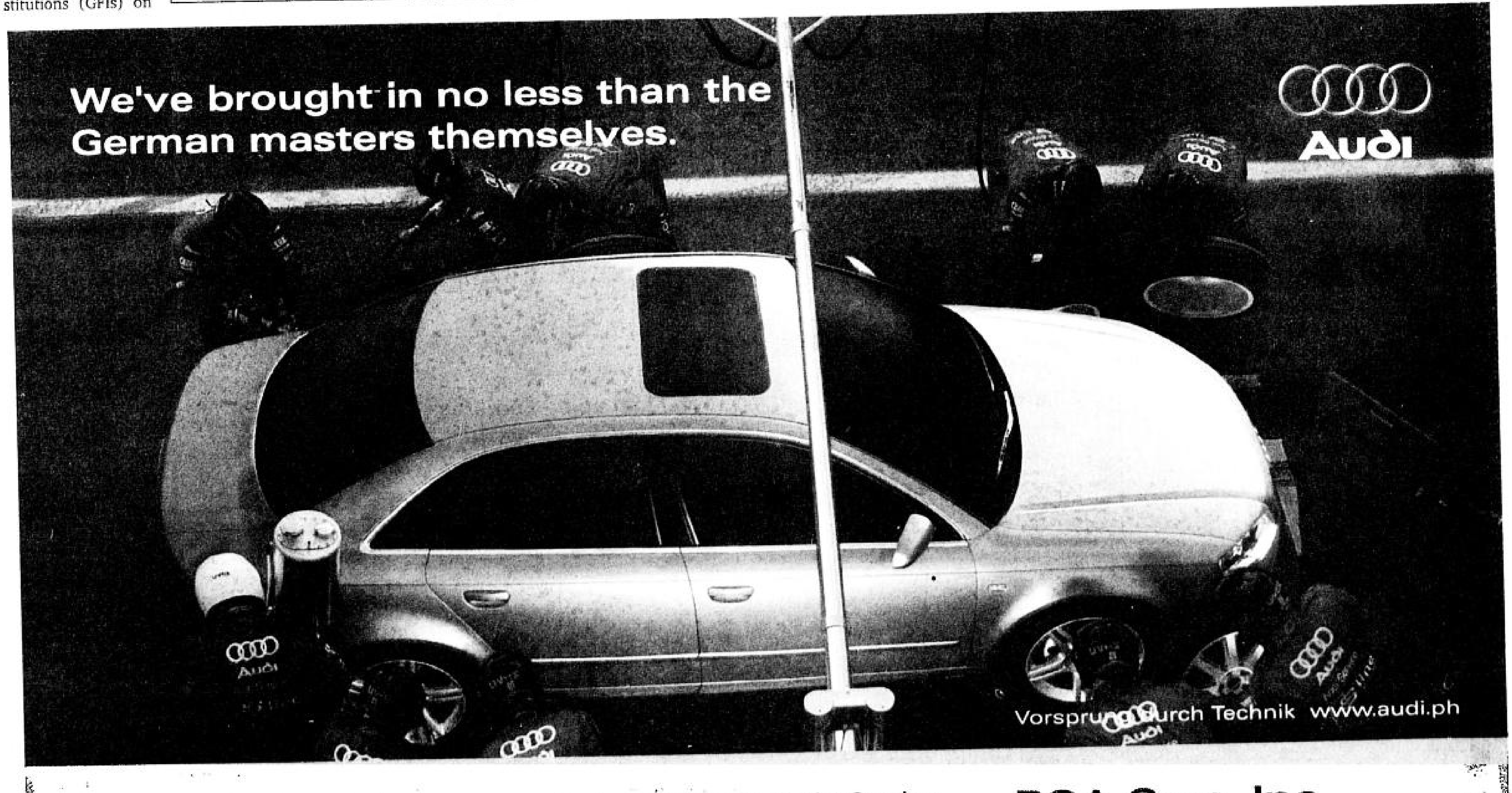
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Banks' bad loans down to 11.3% of portfolio

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE commercial banks' bad loans eased further to 11.3 percent of total loans in March from 11.79 percent a month ago, as more banks were able to sell problematic assets using the special purpose vehicle (SPV) framework.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said Friday commercial banks posted a 3.3-percent decline in non-performing loans and 0.8 percent in their total loan portfolio in March from February levels.

The non-performing loan (NPL) ratio in March stood 2.6 percentage points better than the 13.9 percent of total portfolio a year ago.

"The reduction in NPLs was on account of the P10.56 billion worth of problem loans sold to an SPV," the BSP said.

Net of inter-bank loans, the NPL ratio also improved at 13.49 percent as of end-March, compared to the previous month's 14.08 percent and year ago's 17.02 percent.

The ratio of restructured loans to total loan portfolio, likewise, fell to 6.51 percent from 7.17 percent last month as the banking sector's total restructured loans contracted by 8.4 percent.

BUENAVENTURA

In the meantime, the ratio of restructured loans that soured fell by 11.2 percent, slashing the ratio to total restructured loans by 1.53 percentage points to 48.38 percent.

The ratio of real and other properties owned or acquired to gross assets also declined to 5.11 percent from the previous month's 5.19 percent. Total ropoas stood at P203.63 billion or P1.77 billion lower than the level at end-February.

The industry's non-performing assets—the sum of NPLs and ropoas—dropped to 10.12 percent from 10.45 percent at end-February and 12.56 percent at end-March last year. These NPAs stood at P402.52 billion. As of May 20, the total NPAs approved for sale under the SPV Act of 2002 amounted to P57.21 billion. Of the amount, P44.16 billion represents the bulk sales to SPVs.

The SPV Law which expired in April waived the documentary stamp tax, the capital gains tax, and the e-VAT (expanded value-added tax) and reduces the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent on SPV transactions.

The amount of NPLs now covered by provisions stood at 64.66 percent of total bad loans, as the rate of decline in NPLs outpaced the expansion in loan loss reserves.

The banking system's total loan loss reserves stood at P133.97 billion while NPA reserves were reported at P150.51 billion.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura has been urging the banking community to "bite the bullet" the soonest possible time and trim its NPL ratio to 7.5 percent by the end of the year. He warned that banks might have to face heavier losses if they failed to sell their bad assets before valuation rules were tightened in line with global best practices.

Secretary Santos breaks the law

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

TRADE and Industry Secretary Juan Santos has broken the law. He should be bundled off straight to jail. To share his stinking cell should be his fellow conspirators—the school supplies manufacturers.

On a national TV newscast for everyone to see, Santos proudly proclaimed that, at his behest, the manufacturers had agreed not to raise the prices of school supplies. The manufacturers confirmed the agreement in the same show. The magnanimity was supposed to be a big favor to harassed parents nationwide facing the problem of meeting the expenses of a new school term.

The show was good public relations. But it was illegal—and unconstitutional.

The Constitution says, "Combinations in restraint of trade are not allowed." This props up the penal code's section 186, which says, "The penalty of *prision correccional* in its minimum period or a fine ranging from P200 to P6,000 or both, shall be imposed upon ... any person who shall enter into any contract or agreement or shall take part in any conspiracy or combination in the form of any trust or otherwise, in restraint of trade or commerce or to prevent by artificial means free competition in the market."

The Europeans call it cartel; the Americans call it trust or combination in restraint of trade. A cartel or trust is illegal because it prevents free competition among sellers. Buyers end up grappling with high prices. A cartel exists to keep prices artificially high. Also, a cartel usually results in shoddy products and lackluster services.

Any agreement by two or more manufacturers, suppliers or sellers on prices, such as the one entered into by the school supplies manufacturers; creates a cartel, or trust, or combination in restraint of trade. The blessing by a top government official like Santos makes the cartel even more reprehensible

By putting a cap on the price of school supplies, Santos and his conspirators "prevents by artificial means free competition, in the market." While it is true that the cap stopped the rise in prices (which were probably already high in anticipation of the huge demand at the opening of a new school term), it is also true that prices were prevented from going down. No manufacturer would be stupid enough to price his products below the government-approved cap limit.

Santos could say that competition should not be in price, but in quality. A manufacturer, he could say, is still free to make products of better quality at the agreed maximum price. But this is not the way a truly free and open market works. In the sunlit uplands of an open market, where sellers compete freely for the buyers' orders, a manufacturer must offer products of the highest quality and at the lowest prices. If he does not, his competitor will. A cartel avoids this free interplay of market forces.

The fines are petty cash in today's inflated peso. But six months in the cooler should be enough time for Santos and his fellow conspirators to contemplate their terrible sins.

Instead of violating the Constitution and section 186, Santos should enforce them. There are more than enough cartels around to keep him constantly busy. He should study how come the anti-trust division of the US Department of Justice is so dreaded by American business.

I expected Santos to fight for the Filipino consumer by promoting competition in a free and open market resulting in lower prices. After all, he was a respected former chief executive officer of the local operations of a huge international manufacturing firm. So far, he has been a disappointment.

I caught him in another TV talk show. He said that raising the value-added tax from 10 to 12 percent would have insignificant effect on the price of evaporated milk, or school supplies, since the imported components of these products account for more than half of the total production cost. His presentation was misleading, to say the least, because the imported components are subject to the value-added tax.

If Santos does land in jail, I swear to visit him once a day and twice on Sundays.

GOINGS-ON

Bayer study tour

FIVE of the 18 Bayer Young Environmental Envoys (BYEE) for 2005 were awarded a week-long, all-expense paid study tour in Germany in November.

The five are Lester Louis Lopez of UP Los Baños, Alita Criselle Bautista of Ateneo de Manila University, Ryan Anthony Buccat of Lorma Colleges, Jeffrey Mora of Far Eastern University, John Rex Jardinero of Palawan State University. They will be joining their counterparts from Thailand, India, Singapore, China, Indonesia, Korea, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Poland in the study tour in Germany.

Three other students were selected to represent the Philippines in the inaugural Eco-Minds Asia Pacific Youth Forum, slated this October. They are Jordan Zamoranos of St. Louis University, Gerard Dumancas of University of the Philippines-Cebu. The three Eco-Minds Philippine representatives will be interacting with delegates from eight other Asia-Pacific countries namely, Australia, New Zealand, India, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, China and Korea.

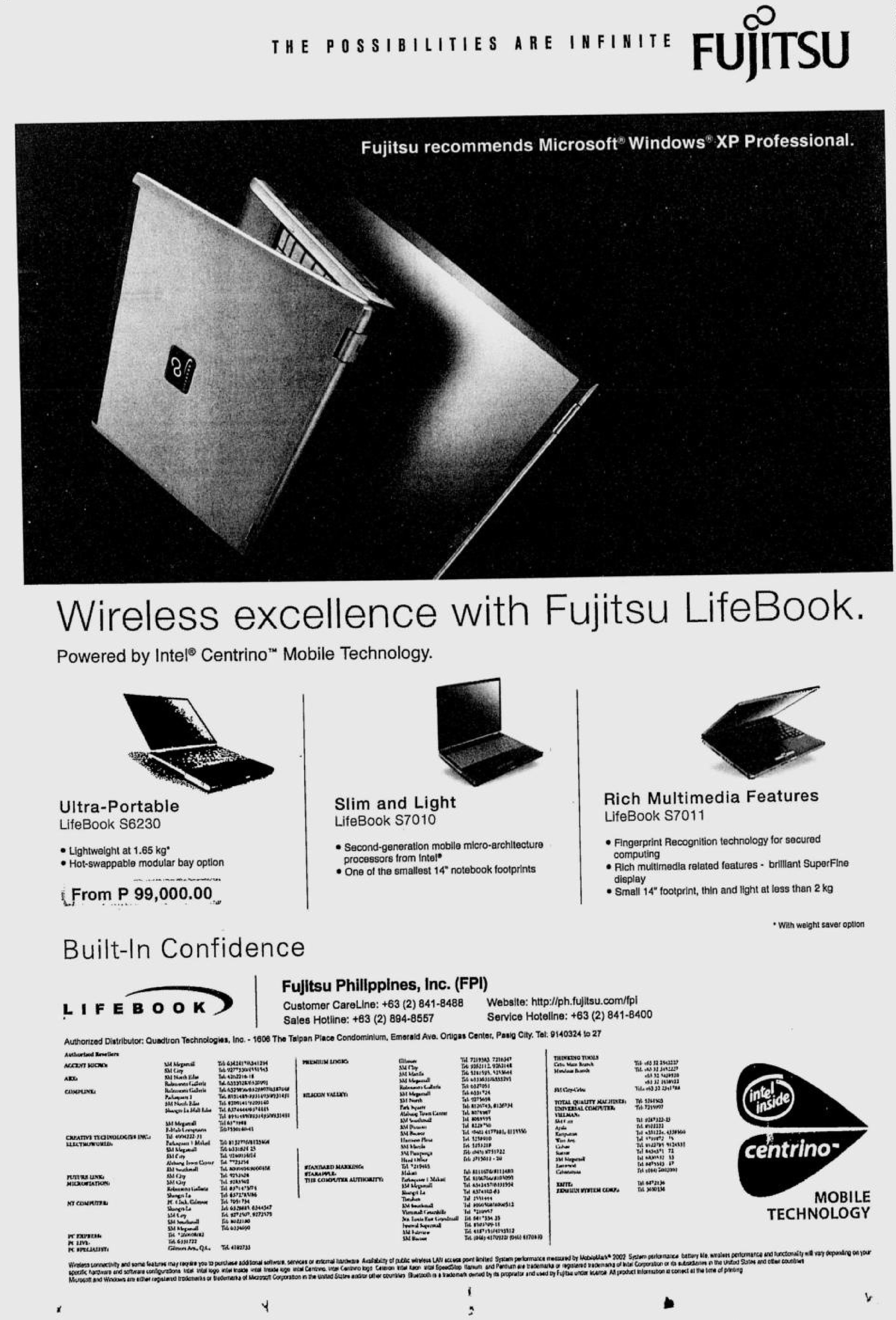
The eight winners were chosen based on their presentations related to the UN Millennium Development Goals, which they expounded on before a distinguished panel of judges from the media, government, the United Nations and youth and nongovernment organizations.

The Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Program seeks to educate the youth in the global efforts to save and protect the environment, and is a flagship initiative of Bayer and the United Nations Environment Program.

Corporate governance workshop

THE MANAGEMENT Association of the Philippines, in collaboration with the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Corporate Governance Institute of the Philippines, will hold the Corporate Governance Workshop for directors, senior mangers and other governance players on June 23, 2005 at the Conservatory of the Peninsula Manila.

Resource speakers include MAP president Simon R. Paterno, Picpa national committee on corporate governance chair Celso P. Vivas, and former Trade Secretary Rizalino S. Navarro. They will be joined by local experts in the fields of financial literacy, risk management literacy, improving board effectiveness, performance rating, legal liabilities and exposures, and values.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5-mo BOI-registered investments down 21.4%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INVESTMENTS approved by the Board of Investments in the first five months went down 21.4 percent to P90.7 billion from P115.4 billion in the comparative period of 2004.

Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos said there were 77 projects approved from January to May, which was about a fifth more than the 63 projects registered in the same period last year.

These projects are expected to create 9,795 new jobs when fully operational or 38.8 percent more than the 6,059 jobs committed last year.

Santos explained that the decrease in terms of total value was due to last year's single-biggest project, which was GNPower Ltd.'s P96.52-billion power complex. This project involves the setting up of a combined cycle power plant that runs on liquefied natural gas.

"But we are on track in relation to our target of registering some P230 billion worth of projects in 2005," the trade chief said. "The amount raised in the first five months is already about 40 percent of the target, and these are just the projects listed with the BOI."

The DTI is also granting investment incentive packages through the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Last March, Santos said the government received investment leads worth about P160 billion or about 70 percent of the target for 2005.

He said most of the leads involved possible ventures in the sectors of mining, processed food and marine products, infrastructure, motor vehicles and parts, electronics, heath and wellness, information technology and IT-enabled services, shipping and ship building.

Under the government's medium-term investment priorities plan, promotional efforts are concentrated on the 11 sectors mentioned.

Over the weekend, Santos said such leads were expected to be realized soon especially big-ticket projects in the mining sector.

What was notable in the first five months, he said, was the combined values of projects in the manufacturing and services sectors reached P38.29 billion, which was an increase of 1,706 percent from the P2.12 billion posted in the year-ago period.

In terms of equity, local investments accounted P70.8 billion or about four-fifths of the five-month total while foreign capital accounted for P19.89 billion.

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No to tax exemptions, says DOF

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance said it was not bent on endorsing any legislative measure that would grant tax exemptions until such time recently approved revenue-raising measures begin showing positive results.

"The bills that seek to provide tax exemptions have less chance of getting DOF's endorsement, considering that we are actually taking out a lot of tax exemptions now," said Finance Undersecretary Emmanuel Bonoan.

Bonoan was referring to several bills filed with Congress that sought tax incentives, such as those proposing tax exemption for the insurance industry and the microfinance sector.

Bonoan said granting tax exemption to some sectors could not be justified at this point in time.

The recently passed value-added tax law, which will take effect in July, took away the VAT exemption previously granted to oil products and electricity, and the legal and medical services sectors.

PURISIMA

The insurance industry, which claims to be a heavily taxed sector, has been calling for some tax relief, through adjustments in the computation of documentary stamp tax (DST).

The microfinance industry, for its part, wants to be granted tax incentives, especially with the government's pronouncements that the development of small business would be one of the top priorities of the Arroyo administration.

House Bill No. 3812, a measure aimed at promoting and hastening the development of microfinance NGOs, seeks to fulfill its objective by granting tax incentives.

"We do not support the passage of this law. The DOF believes that the tax incentives proposed in the bill should be viewed in the light of the national government's policy to rationalize our tax system," said Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima in a statement.

"The DOF however believes that the tax incentives proposed in the bill should be viewed in the light of national government's tax policy to rationalize our tax system that is why we believe that incentives should not be linked to a specific sector and that incentives should be consolidated in the pending Fiscal Incentives law," Purisimsa said in a statement.

Bonoan said the government had yet to see the benefits of the fiscal reform measures that were being implemented.

The VAT law, for instance, is expected to generate some P28 billion to P31 billion this year and as much as P105 billion yearly starting 2006.

The VAT is expected to play a large role in trimming down of the government's budget deficit.

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Big Japan firms . . .

From page B1

ment plans in the Philippines within the year.

Romualdez and Trade Secretary Juan Santos led a Philippine team that conducted a mining conference in Tokyo last week.

The Philippines estimated that its unexplored mineral wealth could reach about $1 trillion. The government wants local and foreign mining firms to pump about $6 billion into 23 priority projects over the next six years.

"Judging from the reaction of the people we met with, there is a growing interest among Japanese investors to put money into our mining industry," Santos said.

Romualdez said Pan Pacific, Japan's biggest metal company, has already put in $15 million to expand Philex Mining's interest in Benguet. Pan Pacific is a joint venture of Nippon Mining and Metals and Mitsui Metal.

"This company is very interested in copper projects, being the largest copper buyer in Japan. They would like to move very quickly on mining projects and are interested in participating from the exploratory all the way to offtake agreements," said Romualdez, who is also president and CEO of Benguet Corp.

Mitsubishi Corp., being the largest trading company in Japan, would like its subsidiary Pacific Metals to invest in nickel ventures in the Philippines.

Romualdez said the nickel ore that Mitsubishi was buying from Rio Tuba in Palawan could be exhausted in three years. "They want to expand outside of Palawan."

Sojitz, a partner of Coral Bay Nickel Corp., is also looking at new nickel projects. Romualdez said Sumitomo Metal, which was also in Coral Bay, was also considering more investments.

Marubeni Corp., he said, was interested in copper projects.

"Demand for copper and nickel is growing and our advantage is that we are very close to Japan as compared to South America where they source some of their requirements," Romualdez said.

He added that other mining ventures were also moving forward. Toledo Corp., for instance, is holding a roadshow in Paris next week to raise $171 million for its Philippine mining projects.

Masbate Gold is also raising $63 million while Tampacan is also tapping the London market for $30 million in funding.

Aside from Japan, the Philippines is actively courting other foreign investors to develop the country's vast mineral resources.

A Supreme Court ruling in December last year that said foreign firms could own up to 100 percent in mining ventures was key in reviving the industry, according to Romualdez.

Analyst expects BSP . . .

From page B1

terest rate differential falls below what is required by investors," Spencer said.

"It will be this, more than inflation per se, that we think will force the BSP to raise another 75 basis points over 12 months," he said. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

The US Fed's funds rate has been increased eight times by 25 basis points each quarter since June last year and is now at 3 percent.

For its part, the BSP raised its key overnight rates by 25 basis points in April for the first time in nearly five years, in a bid to ward off further inflationary pressures from skyrocketing global oil prices.

The overnight borrowing or reverse repurchase rate was raised to 7 percent and the overnight lending or repurchase rate to 9.25 percent.

Meanwhile, foreign portfolio investments, which have led to the peso's appreciation since the start of the year, have started to dwindle after peaking in March.

BSP documents released Friday indicated that the net inflows of hot money for the month of May reached $98.7 million, the lowest montly windfall so far this year. The inflows stood much higher at $543.5 million in January, $334.7 million in February, $562.1 million in March and $279.8 million in April.

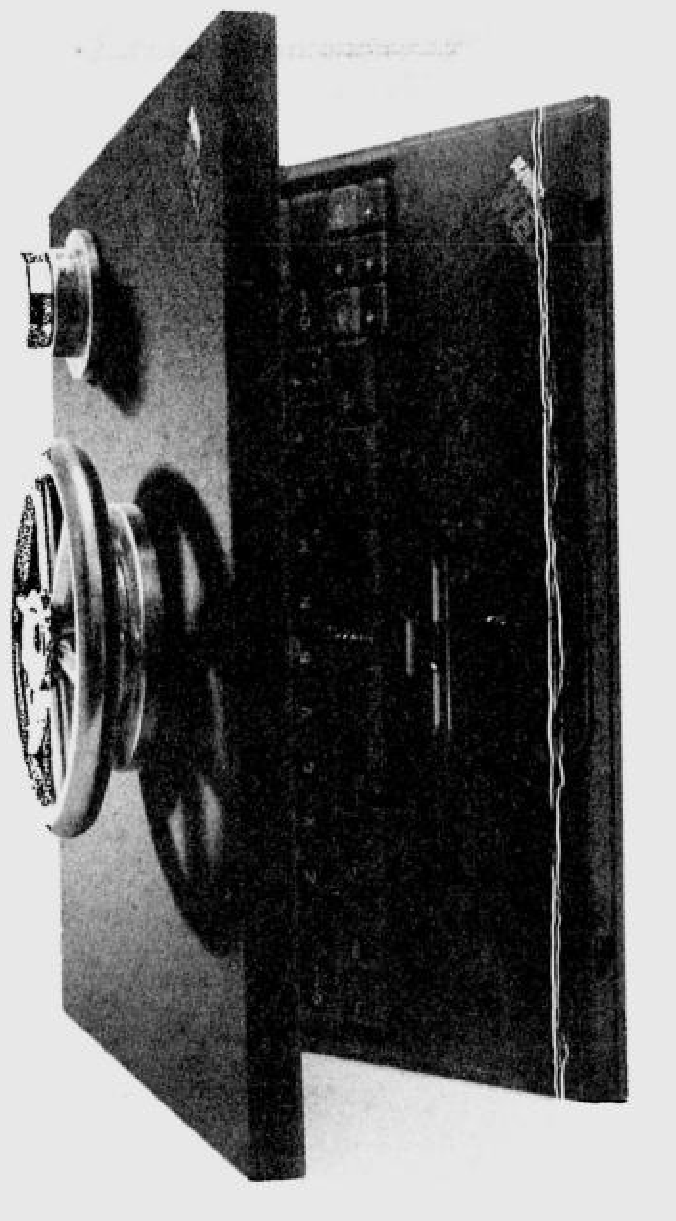
But the BSP sees no need to aggresively mop up funds in the financial system as the interest rate differential between short- and long-term domestic rates has gone down to less than 200 basis points.

Tetangco noted that if the differential between short- and long-term rates were increasing, it meant that the market was expecting an uptrend in inflation over the long haul.

"But in our case, the increase in the spreads is due to the reduction in short-term interest rates and therefore not an indication that inflationary expectations are going up," Tetangco said.

"The decline is in part a recognition of the fiscal reforms that the government has undertaken," he noted.

He said the deceleration even of three-year and four-year domestic interest rates indicated expectations that the government's fiscal position would further improve and medium-term inflation would ease.



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Palace wants to revise VAT law to appease traders

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NEARLY three weeks after finalizing the changes to the expanded value-added tax (VAT), Malacañang wants to revise the much debated tax measure to appease businessmen wary of shrinking profit margins.

Presidential Consultant for Investor Relations Corazon Guidote said that the Department of Finance has put on review one of the provisions in Republic Act No. 9337 or the Expanded VAT Act of 2005 which imposed a 70-percent cap on the VAT that they could pass on to their consumers.

The DOF was forced to seriously consider the possibility of raising the cap to as much as 90 percent after businessmen complained that they could not absorb the 30 percent because it would further add to their losses since most companies have less than 10 percent profit margins.

The 70 percent cap on quarterly input credits was inserted during the protracted deliberations on the expanded VAT as a means to ease the impact of higher taxes on consumers.

Although its purpose was noble, businessmen felt it was unfair to compel them to absorb all the tax costs because it would undermine their operations.

Lawmakers had previously adopted a no-pass-on provision on oil and energy companies that would force them to absorb the entire 10-percent VAT.

But this provision was dropped during the bicameral conference after oil and energy companies warned that this would affect the viability of their operations.

The pending changes in the newly signed expanded VAT law comes on the heels of a petition seeking to block its implementation.

The expanded VAT, which was signed by the President with little fanfare on May 24, basically removes the VAT exemptions enjoyed by select sectors and gives the President a standby authority to raise the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent starting January next year if revenue collections do not improve to desired levels.

The expanded VAT law takes effect next month.

The new VAT law is expected to raise an additional P28.75 billion for the government this year and P105.23 billion in its full year of implementation. This is largely due to improved collection efficiency beyond the current 70 percent, with the removal of exemptions enjoyed by doctors, lawyers, and cooperatives, as well as the sale and importation of coal, natural gas, and petroleum products, and books and magazines.

The expanded VAT law is expected to bring down to zero the budget deficit by 2008.

ROLLING STORE GATHERING
President Macapagal-Arroyo is greeted by residents of Camarin, Caloocan City, as she inspects a rolling store selling packed vegetables. EDWIN BACASMAS

In US, quiet applause greets passage of RP tax reform

By Abigail L. Ho

INSTITUTIONAL investors in the United States view the passage of the expanded value-added tax (VAT) law as a big step in restoring the country's fiscal health, a former Cabinet official said.

Coming from recent speaking engagements in the US, former Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said that institutional investors had been closely monitoring congressional deliberations on the e-VAT law.

"(They) silently applauded the passage of the VAT Law as a crucial step in the restoration of the fiscal health of the country," he said.

He added that the passage of the VAT law showed the political will and maturity of Congress as this was deemed a very unpopular tax measure by many sectors of society.

The VAT law, he said, was "one of the most difficult legislative measures that Congress has had to make in recent years."

In relation to the VAT law, Perez said a provision in the law that gave zero VAT rating to power and fuel generated through renewable sources was another welcome development.

"We hope that more players will invest in developing our untapped renewable energy resources to increase our energy self-sufficiency and advance our march towards energy independence," Perez said.

In May 2003, the Department of Energy launched a comprehensive Renewable Energy Policy Framework, which was cited as one of the best national renewable energy policies in the world during the May 2004 Ministerial Conference on Renewable Energy held in Germany.

The DOE is pushing for the use of renewable energy sources as it aims to achieve 60-percent energy self-sufficiency by 2010 in light of volatile world oil prices.

NTC may impose caps on currency adjustments

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission is planning to restrict the amount the phone companies get to pass on to consumers as foreign currency adjustment.

NTC chair Ronald Solis said that the Commission was studying a plan to draft new rules covering currency exchange rate adjustment or Cera.

"The Commission is proposing to impose a ceiling ... [the measure] will still allow telcos to adjust their rates, but [these must] not exceed the ceiling that the NTC would prescribe," said Solis in a letter to the House committee on trade and industry.

Congress asked the NTC to make a stand on pending bills that would prohibit the likes of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the Manila Electric Co., the Maynilad Water Services Inc., and other utilities, from passing on the cost of exchange rate adjustment to their consumers.

Utility companies have been allowed by regulators to charge the costs of exchange rate adjustments to their consumers. Most companies, particularly those in the telco industry, incurred huge exchange rate costs because of the dollar loans used to finance the roll-out of telco infrastructure.

Solis told Congress that the NTC would have no objections to the proposed law.

For the meantime, he said the commission would address the issue of exchange rate costs within the telco industry.

The plan, he said, was to determine a reasonable ceiling on exchange rate costs passed on to consumers by using factors like consumer price index and improvement in the efficiency of a telco's operations.

The Cera, he said, allowed companies to recover losses and service their dollar loans.

Solis said if found viable, the new formula imposing price caps would replace Cera in the telco industry.

The rule-of-thumb among telcos is that for every 10 centavo movement in the exchange rate, phone charges could be adjusted by one percent from the rate base.

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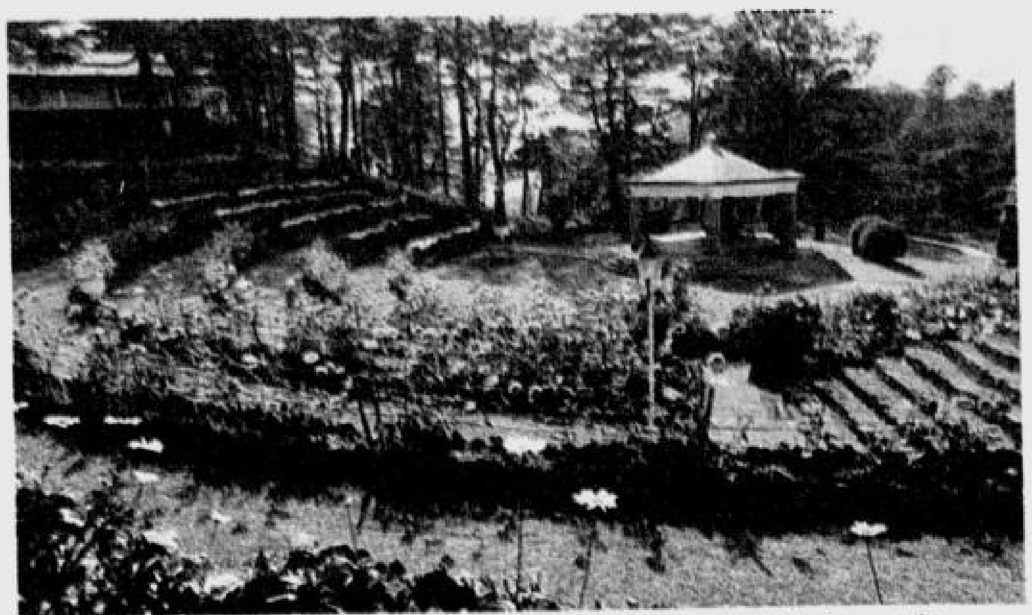


INTERESTED investors would need to undergo a new bidding process to take over the CJHDevco lease.

3 groups interested in John Hay ecozone

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Two local corporations and one foreign group have submitted formal proposals to run the Camp John Hay economic zone, which fell into a crisis after the Supreme Court withdrew its tax incentives.

Lawyer Lyssa Pagano-Calde, operations officer of the John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC), said this in a meeting with officials of Inbound Pacific Corp., one of the zone's business enterprises, last Friday. Calde briefed the company on the options being considered to keep the John Hay ecozone running.

Calde, however, refused to name the interested groups. One of which is one of the country's major business conglomerates.

On Thursday, JHMC asked the Philippine Economic Zone Authority to annex John Hay economic zone so it could avail itself of incentives provided to Peza-registered ecozones.

Calde said interested investors would need to undergo a new bidding process to take over the CJHDevco lease.

She told Inbound Pacific that the Bases Conversion Development Corp. (BCDA) had terminated CJHDevco's lease on April 30,2005 for "material breach of contract" involving more than P2 billion in unpaid rent and taxes. The developer,however, asked a regional trial court here on Thursday to decide whether a Supreme Court ruling that nullified its tax benefits compelled the firm to pay the government all of its back taxes.

Georgina Alvarez, CJHDevco senior vice president for legal and corporate affairs, said the developer had asked the court for declaratory relief so it could address billions of pesos worth of back taxes imposed by the Bureau of Customs.

The BIR relied on the High Court's March 29 resolution, which affirmed with finality the invalidation of John Hay's tax shields.

A declaratory relief petition seeks "preventive remedy" by asking a court "to declare the petitioner's rights or duties" under a disputed contract.

Alvarez said CJHDevco's contention was that the ruling might not affect the firm retroactively.

The Supreme Court ruled that only Congress could grant tax benefits to new economic zones created by the BCDA. It voided John Hay's tax incentives, which former President Fidel Ramos had prescribed in Presidential Proclamation 420.

Republic Act 7227 (the BCDA law) detailed the creation of the Subic Bay special economic zone.

CJHDevco sued BCDA before the Philippine Dispute Resolution Center, a corporate arbitration agency, for P10 billion in damages due to the flaws in RA 7227, which compelled the High Court to nullify John Hay's tax benefits.

But BCDA this week formally declined to submit to arbitration, Calde said. She said no dispute existed because the lease termination was based on CJHDevco's refusal to pay its rent.

Lawyer Gilbert Reyes, Inbound Pacific counsel, said BCDA's refusal is strategic because it had to stand by its decision to end CJHDevco's contract.

But he questioned government's option to use Peza rules in running the John Hay zone. He said Peza was imposing higher fees than BCDA.

Revoke accreditation order, BCDA unit urged

BAGUIO CITY—Sub-locators operating inside the John Hay Special Economic Zone are asking the government, through the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA), to revoke a memorandum circular issued by zone administrator John Hay Management Corp. compelling them to secure accreditation before they can continue doing business here.

In a letter addressed to BCDA-JHMC, 40 establishments called for the revocation of Memorandum Circular No. 2005-05-001, which requires the accreditation of enterprises inside Camp John Hay. Under the accreditation process, JHMC requires all businesses to pay an accreditation fee of US$60.00 and P1,500, or around P7,500 in exchange for recognition in the zone. The business firms said the new requirement was "excessive, burdensome and unnecessary."

"To impose an accreditation requirement without any added benefit to us would add insult to injury, considering what we are now experiencing," the businessmen said. They are referring to the unexpected withdrawal by the Supreme Court of the tax and financial incentives promised to them by the government, which was a major consideration in their decision to invest in the John Hay ecozone.

At the same time, the sub-locators decried the unlawful interference of government with their existing contract with CJHDevCo.

Tight fiscal policy delays ODA-funded infra projects

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT's belt-tightening measures have been causing delays in the implementation of various infrastructure projects nationwide, the National Economic and Development Authority said.

Roads and bridges construction projects financed by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and multilateral donors are now experiencing delays due to constraints in the budgets of various government agencies. For such projects, concerned government agencies need to come up with counterpart funds.

This is one of the major factors that adversely affected the implementation of some 156 development projects, Neda project monitoring director Victor Emmanuel Dato said, quoting the preliminary report of his unit.

"We have less budget cover for loans that require counterpart funds," Dato said.

Dato explained that Congress' failure to approve a national budget last year have led to the 'reenactment' of the government's budget in the previous year. This meant no specific budget was earmarked for new development projects.

According to Presidential Economic Adviser and Albay Rep. Jose Sarte Salceda, this is one of the consequences of the tight fiscal policy adopted by the Arroyo administration.

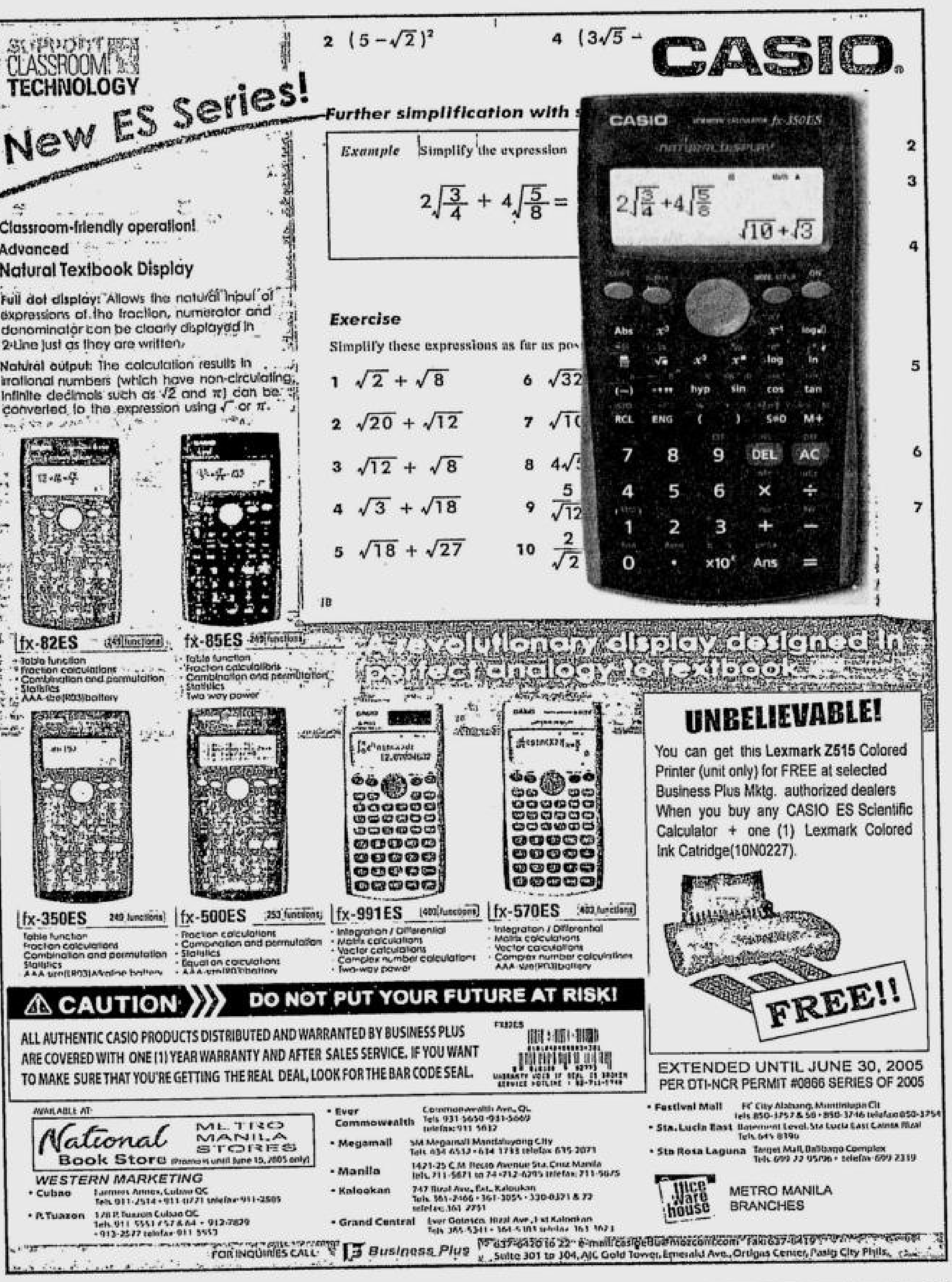
"This is expected to remain in the next two years as we tighten up on our foreign borrowings. As we go along, we can make adjustments," Salceda said in an interview.

In the last four years, ODA (official development assistance) commitments have been declining because of the emphasis given by the government to project quality and fiscal tightening. From a peak of US$13.3 billion in 2000, ODA loan commitment amounted to $10.9 billion as of Dec. 31, 2003, which is 8 percent lower than the 2002 figure.

Japan, through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), remained the largest source of ODA loans, accounting for 62 percent (or US$6.8 billion with 79 loans) of the total ODA loans granted to the Philippines.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) followed with 14 percent (or US$1.6 billion) while the World Bank had a share of 13 percent (or US$1.4 billion).

Other Sources (like Australia, Austria, China, Danida, European Investment Bank, France, Germany, IFAD, Korea, Kuwait, Nordic Development Fund, Opec, Spain and the United Kingdom) accounted for the remaining US$1.1 billion or 11 percent of the total ODA loans portfolio.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Local, int'l experts converge in Franchise 2005

LOCAL franchise gurus and international experts will converge at the country's premier franchise event of the year, Franchise 2005-the Philippine International Franchise Conference and Expo (Pifce) on July 14 and 15 (conference) at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel, July 15 to 17 (expo) at the World Trade Center, and on July 12 and 13 at the Asian Institute of Management for the Certified Franchise Executive Program.

Organized by the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA), Franchise 2005 will provide participants the opportunity to keep abreast on the latest trends and updates on business. For inquiries and registration, call the PFA secretariat at 687-0365 to 67, 0917-8320732 or e-mail pfa@nwave.net, log on to www.philippinefranchiseassociation.com. Early bird rates are available until June 15 only.

Peter Holt, International Franchise Association (IFA) chair for International Affairs Network, will lead the international speakers at the Plenary Session on Day One who will talk on the "International Growth in Franchising: Cultural, Trade and Legal Barriers".

Local topnotch speakers include Samie Lim (CFE), chair, Philippine Franchise Association; Dr. Roberto de Vera, regional strategies group director, University of Asia & the Pacific (UA&P); Jose Ma. Concepcion III, Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship; Vicky Abad, Asia panel division director, Taylor Nelson Sofres Philippines; Donald Patrick Lim, president, Philippine Marketing Association; lawyer Claro Parlade, partner, Parlade Hildawa Parlade and Eco (PHPE) Law Office; Julie Gandionco, founder, Julie's Franchise Corp; and Geni G. Gonzales, marketing consultant, Plains & Prints. Topics to be discussed are: "When Urban Markets Consolidate"; "Consumer Behavior and Trends"; "Global Trends & Opportunities in Franchising"; "Below-the-line Advertising"; "Achieving Win-Win Situation in Franchise Relationship"; "Formulas for Success: A Panel of Experts (Life Begins at 50: A Woman's Love Story with Franchising)"; "Innovative Marketing Strategies: Key to Franchise Growth", among others.

The Educational Franchise Sessions on day two will provide franchisors and franchisees the opportunity to interact with industry experts and learn insider tips on how to raise franchise business success rate to new heights from the local gurus, namely: Martin Lorenzo, chair and president, Pancake House and Dencio's Foods Specialists; Michael Trillana, president, The Doughnut People Inc. (Go Nuts Donuts), Allan Yaptinchay, real estate and asset management consultant, Global Franchise Marketing; Rudy Ang, dean, John Gokongwei School of Management, Ateneo de Manila University; and, Daniel Ongchoco, Franchisee of the Year-FEA 2004. Topics to be discussed are: "Restoring Health to Troubled Franchisees"; "Going Nuts About Brand: Is it the Taste or the Name?"; "Site Selection: What Are The Key Elements To Look For?"; "How to Choose the Right Franchisor"; How Small Franchisors Build Big Brands", among others.

Franchise 2005 will be participated in at the international pavilion by other countries including Thailand, Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

Co-presented by PLDT Business Solutions, Franchise 2005 is a joint undertaking of the PFA and the Department of Trade and Industry, and supported by Nestlé Foodservices, Montanara, Francorp, Goldilocks, Greenwich, Julie's Bakeshop, Max's Franchising; Chowking, Quali Plus International, Globe Handyphone, Entrepreneur Philippines, RJ 100, Shangri-la Plaza, and the Ayala Center.

41 ISUZU IPVS TO ANDRESONS GROUP

The Andresons Group Inc, distributor of Emperador Brandy, recently purchased 41 units of Isuzu NPR 6-wheeler Light Duty Truck and Isuzu Passenger Vans (IPV). Shown during the turnover at the Isuzu Quezon Avenue dealership are, from left, Jun Sereno, manager of Centro Manufacturing Corp; Rico Macalintal, corporate sales manager of Isuzu Philippines Corp; Eleizer Sibayan-Joaquin, vice president for finance of the Andresons Group Inc; Ulysses Jarina, branch manager of Isuzu Quezon Avenue; and Raffy Juan, president of Centro Manufacturing Corp. Photo above shows some of the IPV units

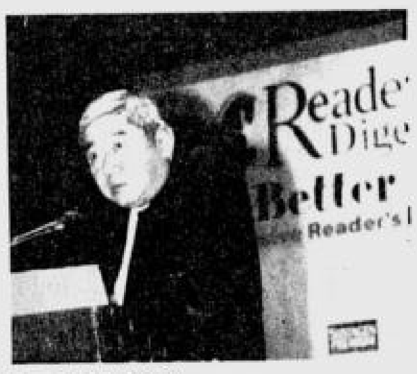
Reader's Digest holds health forum in RP

READER'S Digest recently held the "For Better Health" forum participated in by experts in the field of health and nutrition who discussed some of the top health concerns of Asians today. Guest speakers included Dr. Charles Chan, a cardiologist, and Dr. Tan Kai Chah, a hepatobiliary liver surgeon-specialists from the Parkway Group Healthcare of Singapore, who talked about heart attack and liver transplantation, respectively. Albert Garcia, president of Garsworth Marketing Inc, explained how fiber aids in digestive health.

Cathy Babao-Guballa, editor-in-chief of Health Today and a lecturer at the Ateneo de Manila University, focused on emotional health in her discussion on how to handle grief. Dr. Roberto Ang, a cornea, glaucoma and refractive eye surgeon, talked about the Lasik Refractive Eye Surgery.

Representing Reader's Digest at the health forum were Simon Cholmeley, regional advertising director of Reader's Digest Asia, and Lilet Camara-Yan, Reader's Digest Asia advertising director for the Philippines. Department of Health Undersecretary for Special Health Concerns Jade F. del Mundo formally opened the afternoon event with an inspirational address.

The health forum, which is the first by Reader's Digest in the Philippines, was held in cooperation with the Singapore Tourism Board, Philamlife, Mead Johnson, Nestle Baby Food, C-Lium Fibre and Health Today.



DR. CHARLES Chan

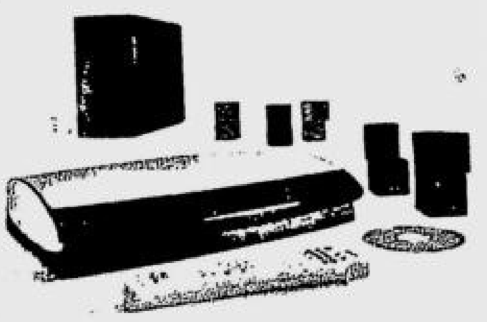
PHILIPPINE BUSINESS MISSION IN JAPAN

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano (2nd from left) is joined by Ambassador Domingo L. Siazon Jr, Land Infrastructure and Transport Minister Kazuo Kitagawa and Japan Association of Travel Agents chair Koji Shinmachi in a toast capping the successful 10-day Philippine Business Mission in Japan. The mission covered the cities of Osaka, Nagoya, and Tokyo. Picture was taken by TIP International president Itsuo Ichimura.

ProductFILES

Intelligent theater system from Bose

THE BOSE Lifestyle 48 DVD home entertainment system will change the way you think about movies and music-even your CD collection. Digitally store and organize up to 340 hours of music in the media center, featuring a progressive scan DVD/CD player. The Adaptiq audio calibration system analyzes your room and adjusts your Lifestyle system's sound for great performance and cinematic experience.



One of the key elements of the Lifestyle 48 DVD system features the award-winning Jewel Cube speaker arrays-measuring only 4½ inches high-for dramatically lifelike sound. These are the smallest and most powerful speaker arrays of Bose, yet they deliver sound you would expect from speakers many times their size. The Jewel Cube speakers fill your room with wondrous surround sound.

At the heart of the Bose entertainment system is the Acoustimass module, which produces resounding low notes that bring action sequences to life and adds fullness to music. The Acoustimass module can be placed out of sight, so all the sound seems to come from the Jewel Cube speaker arrays.

The Lifestyle 48 DVD system puts it all together with innovative approaches that let you easily customize your listening experience. All with the performance, elegance and simplicity you expect from Bose. For inquiries about Bose entertainment systems, call 898-2048, 634-8484, or visit showrooms at the Rockwell Powerplant Mall, SM Megamall, SM City North Edsa, Festival Supermall, Robinsons Place Manila, or log on to www.eleksis.com.

Save and build your wealth

WITH today's financial difficulties, there's a need to plan how we can save up for the future. The value of saving knows no boundaries. It is as important to single unmarried individuals as it is for families.

To implement a savings plan, make it a habit to set a portion of your income, about 20 percent would be just right, not too small to undermine the potential of the money to grow, yet not too big to cramp your budget.

Put your savings in a bank. Of all outlets, banks remain the most reliable because they specialize in protecting and making the depositors' money grow.

East West Banking Corp offers a host of savings instruments that offer superior convenience and higher yields for its depositors.

You can open a passbook savings account or a statement savings account for a minimum deposit of P2,000. Your money earns a guaranteed 1.5 percent per annum interest.

If you want to take advantage of the strength of the dollar, you can choose a dollar savings account, which you can open with a minimum deposit of $200. The account has the capacity to earn 0.75 percent interest per annum.

If you have bigger savings and you want that amount to grow faster, you may opt for East West Bank's premium deposit product-the Savings Maximizer. For a minimum initial deposit of only P50,000, clients can open a Savings Maximizer Account and take advantage of higher yields as their savings increase. With the tiered pricing scheme, interest rates are accurately computed based on average daily balances and may be adjusted according to market rates at the start of each month.

The Savings Maximizer allows clients to enjoy their savings with yields up to 3.5 percent interest per annum. In addition, the Savings Maximizer comes with a free ATM access card that allows depositors to deposit or withdraw from their account anytime, anywhere. For clients who want online banking convenience, the Savings Maximizer can be enrolled in NetAccess, East West Bank's online banking facility. Using NetAccess, the depositor can do balance inquiry, bills payment and fund transfers. All transactions in NetAccess are free of charge.

What's more important is that the deposits in Savings Maximizer are insured with the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

For inquiries on East West Bank Savings Maximizer, visit any East West Bank personal banking center (PBC) near you or call 888-17.

BITS Clips

Follow the Sun

UNTIL today, June 13, a party of three can get their Boracay getaway for only P2,860 per person for 3 days and 2 nights. For couples, it's only P3,300 per person, while those going solo can enjoy the island for only P6,600. For a 4-day, 3-night stay, you enjoy the unbelievably low rates of P4,060 (triple occupancy), P4,700 (double occupancy) or P9,300 (single occupancy). This fun package includes standard room accommodation, breakfasts (starting on the 2nd day), welcome drinks, and roundtrip land and boat transfers. The Sun Village Beachfront Resort is located at the more private and peaceful southern end of White Beach, but within sight of the busier restaurant and bar strip of Boracay. For more information on the Sun Village Boracay Resorts, call its Manila office at 813-1338, 893-7293, or fax 817-1186.

APC organizes industry seminars

AMERICAN Power Conversion (APC), the world's leading end-to-end solutions provider for real-time infrastructure, will hold the inaugural APC Vertical Industry Event Seminar Series. The event, which is geared towards the government, financial services, manufacturing, education and wholesale/retail sectors, will take place from June 14 to 17 at the Ipil-Ipil function room of Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati. A whole range of topics affecting different industries will be tackled in the seminar series. Other highlights that can also be expected from the event are exhibits, infrastructure demos and tours, an on-the-spot infrastructure design consultancy through APC's build-out tool (BOT) and customer case studies per industry. For inquiries, call Marie Pagaduan at 897-6391.

Scratch a prize

THE NEWEST promotion of House of Praise, in celebration of Praise Inc's 25th anniversary, is introduced. For every P250 single receipt worth of products, customers will receive one scratch card, and get instant prizes that can be redeemed at the store where the Praise product was bought. Promo runs until Aug. 31 at all House of Praise stores nationwide. House of Praise is a wholly owned subsidiary of Praise Inc, a recognized distributor of internationally and locally produced Christian products on praise and worship and spiritual upliftment-from music and video to literature and gift items.

Singapore as techno hub

SINGAPORE establishes itself yet again as the premiere technology hub of Asia when global players in the ICT industry showcase their innovations during CommunicAsia2005 and BroadcastAsia2005. The conferences, scheduled for June 14 to 17, provide a venue for regional and international players in the information and communications technology fields to give participants a glimpse of the latest industry trends and newest products and services at the Singapore Expo. The exhibitions will cover wireless technologies, Smart Card, next generation networks, 3G, mobile communications and digital lifestyle and entertainment. CommunicAsia2005 and BroadcastAsia2005 are organized by the Singapore Exhibition Services (SES), recognized regionally for high-impact trade shows and exhibitions. Log on to www.communicasia.com and www.broadcast-asia.com.

Red Box P99 happy hour

HERE'S one last indulgence before summer ends. Red Box Karaoke, the trendiest and coolest karaoke place in the metropolis, announces its special promo of P99 Happy Hour for all students. Students can enjoy singing in front of flat, wide-paneled TV screens from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. as they choose from over 30,000 songs in store, for only P99 and inclusive of one free drink. Non-students, meanwhile, can sing their hearts out for 20 percent less than the standard Happy Hour rates as a one-time privilege during the promo period. Red Box is at Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati. For reservation and inquiries, call 757-6188. The promo is valid until June 15.

Tai Chi and the City

EASTWOOD City lets you experience the amazing benefits of the superb integrated discipline of the body and mind with Tai Chi sessions every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m. starting June 14. Sessions will be led by Tai Chi masters from the Blue Dragon Society. Health buffs can sway freely to the Tai Chi rhythm while enjoying the relaxing water fountains and charming cobbled walkways of the peaceful, Mediterranean-inspired Eastwood City Walk 2. For information on the healthy lifestyle at Eastwood City, call 687-6770 to 74 and ask for Karen or Cecil.

Salad, sandwich fest

STAYING fit and healthy need not be expensive. With CountryStyle's Salad and Sandwich Fest, you can indulge healthily without causing a dent in your pocket. CountryStyle's Salad and Sandwich Fest promo offers you delicious discounts on all its Salad and Sandwich Meals. Enjoy the feast at selected CountryStyle outlets. Promo runs until June 15.

Ustas Alumni Ensemble on 1st int'l performance

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas Action Singers Alumni Ensemble (UST-Asae) is currently engaged in its first-ever international performance in Hong Kong from June 9 to 13.

UST-Asae was formed October 1994 with the goal of raising funds for our brothers and sisters in Mabalacat, Pampanga who were victims of lahar floods brought about by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. The members are all alumnus of the UST Action Singers-a university-wide choral group of the University of Santo Tomas founded on March 6, 1972.

After the group was formed, it started to meet and practice regularly and accept singing performances of different types.

Now, after so many engagements around the Philippines, UST-Asae is ready to perform internationally under the musical direction of Rolly Limun and with Nobel Gabasan as musical consultant.

The group's Hong Kong tour is sponsored by the Philippine Consulate in Hong Kong headed by Consul General Corazon Belmonte-Jover with the help of Angie Aguilar (cultural section, Philippine Consulate in HK) and Nobleto Gabasan. The main highlight of the concert tour is the performance for the Hong Kong Diplomatic Corps at the Marriott Hotel.

Other performances of the group was at the Hong Lok Yuen International School (June 10), CyberPort in Pokfulam (June 11), and at the Chater Garden (June 12) for a Holy Mass in the morning and a mini-concert in the afternoon for the celebration of our Independence Day.

Members of the University of Santo Tomas Action Singers Alumni Ensemble are Weng Eraña, Cezua Pangilinan, Ivy Joy Maniquiz, Vicky Engo, Tess Lara, Ellen Samano, Cecil Sevilla, Ramil Angeles, Benedict Baluyot, Cocoy Pobre, Jhun Ramos, Noel De Mesa, Junjun Garcia, Allan Mirasol and Peter Carrillo.

MEMBERS of the University of Santo Tomas Action Singers Alumni Ensemble

ELLEN LISING SIGNS UP WITH BIOLINK PHARMA

Beauty expert Ellen Lising recently signed up as the newest product endorser for Nutrafit and Exofat Forte. Nutrafit naturally aids in increasing metabolism, thus burning those unwanted fats without burning you out. Exofat Forte is an all-natural premium lipid absorber that is clinically proven to bind fats and prevent it from being absorbed in the body. These products are available at all Mercury Drugstores and Ellen's Aesthetic Center nationwide, and are exclusively manufactured by Biolink Pharma. For more information, call 411-4448 or 413-5079. Shown are (from left) Joyce Lopez, sales manager, Biolink Pharma, Richard Hiñola, ad and promo director, Ellen's Aesthetic Center, Ellen Lising, beauty expert and president, Ellen's Aesthetic Center, Sheila Mae Velilla, CEO, Biolink Pharma, and Tess Garlitos, brand manager, Biolink Pharma.

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A COMPACT-PRIME PARTNERSHIP

Compact Graphics Advertising Design Services Inc managing director Bart A. Oflana (seated left) and Manny Carvajal, marketing director of Prime Channel, recently inked a partnership deal that aims to exceed client expectations under a contract theme dubbed 'An Ink of Partnership Deal for Bigger Business Potentials' authorizing Compact Graphics Advertising Design Services as Prime Channel's official sales service group. This Compact-Prime partnership was also attended by (standing, from left) sales director Benny Calasanz, assistant sales director Arnold Bacani, finance and administrative head Eduardo Alcala, and president Louie Sison.

NBI IRD CHIEF IS OUTSTANDING MASON

Francisco B. Donozo Jr, chief of the NBI Identification and Record Division (IRD), receives a plaque of recognition from Grand Master Roberto Q. Pagotan (right) for being outstanding Mason in the field of government service for his exemplary performance together with the NBI forensic team sent by NBI Director Reynaldo G. Wycoco in identifying the bodies of Filipino victims of the tsunami that hit Phuket, Thailand. The 89th Mason Grand Annual Convention held at Tagaytay International Convention Center in Tagaytay City. Looking on is past Grand Master Danilo Angeles.

Tagaytay Mas

The future in videoke entertainment today

Fiesta
2005 EDITION
WOW!
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FILIPINOS love to have fun, and it is obvious in the way they celebrate fiestas or festivals. Fiestas or any community celebrations usually feature food feasts, parades, street parties, dancing and doing different types of entertainment, which includes one activity that Filipinos love the most-singing their hearts out.

WOW! Magic Sing Premium Videoke Microphone has given new meaning to the word "fiesta" with the introduction of its Fiesta 2005 Edition. Fiesta 2005 Edition's advanced innovations include: Sleek and slim microphone design for easier grip handling; fixed cable-making it easier and faster to set up and install; 4 song chip slots; User friendly operating system-numbers alongside functions are displayed on screen after pressing Mode button, immediately giving you access to its multi-functions and other features.

You still get to enjoy its standard features such as: Real-time scoring; Adjustable lyric display; Song select repeat; First lyric line display-on browse. for added enjoyment and convenience; Amateur, professional or star singer scoring level that fits your singing ability. Plus, you can also change the voice style from male to female version and vice versa. Its on screen song list is set up alphabetically according to artist-that means no more of the endless searching for that particular song.

If you're one of those who are tired of seeing foreign background images commonly associated with other videoke microphones, then you will get a kick-out of viewing 61 built-in WOW Philippines scenic backgrounds images. WOW! Magic Sing Premium is the only videoke microphone in the market today that supports and promotes Philippine tourism.

But that's not all. As a bonus, you get the following freebies when you buy a Fiesta 2005 Edition, such as neckphone, mic stand, full color guide to the 61 WOW Philippines picture backgrounds and a copy of the "Sing through the Philippines" VCD, which contains the Philippine Tourism Authority's "Pilipino sa Turismo ay Aktibo" MTV.

The MTV is an island-hopping adventure showcasing the country's world-class tourist destinations. It also features a host of celebrities, such as Gary Valenciano, Kuh Ledesma, Kris Aquino, Ai-Ai delas Alas, Claudine Barretto, Piolo Pascual, Heart Evangelista, Ella May Saison, Jamie Rivera, Dianne dela Fuente, April Boy Regino and many others.

Now with its fully loaded features, you can let "the good times roll" at fiestas, parties, at the beach, kicking-back over a couple of bottles of beer with friends, or simply unwinding at home after a hard days work.

The Fiesta 2005 Edition is exclusively distributed by In-A-Jiffy Enterprises and G2K Corp. You can get your unit from over 300 dealer/outlets nationwide. For more information, call 285-2663, 722-5527 or log on to www.magicmic.com.

Exclusive services from Autotechnika

DO YOU have a Mercedes Benz E- or S-class or BMW 5-, 7-series or X5 that has a factory dash-mounted TV monitor? The TV monitors on these vehicles revert to a blue screen, in the case of the Benz, or the iDrive menu, in the case of the Bimmer, when the transmission is in Drive and the brake pedal is released, depriving the driver and front passenger of the video entertainment purposely for safety reasons. However, in the Metro Manila traffic gridlock we constantly find ourselves in, don't you sometimes wish this feature could be defeated so the front seat occupants can also enjoy some entertainment during those long traffic queues?

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If you go for the "bling-bling" in your European, American or Japanese sport sedan or SUV, Autotechnika likewise boasts of having the right equipment to mount, balance and align after-market wheels from 21- to 27-inches in diameter. Off-road enthusiasts using monster wheels up to 38-inches can also avail themselves of this procedure. Besides these exclusive services, Autotechnika offers personalized assistance and reasonable prices for their TUV-certified services. For car-loving dads, Autotechnika offers free labor on oil changes in honor of Father's Day this month of June.

Visit Autotechnika at the Mancor Building at Fairview Avenue in Fairview, Quezon City (along Commonwealth Avenue beside BPI and Metrobank) or call 461-6400 to 04, fax 431-4020 to avail yourself of these exclusive services, and treat your car to the care it deserves.

NOVARTIS DONATION

Philippine National Red Cross Chair and Sen. Richard Gordon receives a check donation for the flood victims in Aurora and Quezon provinces from Dr. Francis Domingo, medical director of Novartis Philippines. The donation came from Novartis employees, while Novartis donated an equivalent amount. Also shown is Joan Soliman, Novartis human resource manager. Novartis Philippines is one of the country's leading research-based pharmaceutical companies that put importance on their corporate social responsibilities.

AYALA LIFE & AYALA PLANS
AWARDS NIGHT

AYALA LIFE, AYALA PLANS HONOR TOP SALES PEOPLE

Ayala Life Assurance Inc (Alai) and Ayala Plans Inc. (AP) held a joint awards night recently for their top sales people. At the ceremonies, company executives offered a toast to the Ayala Life Diamond Club awardees and Ayala Plans President's Circle awardees. Present were: (front row, from left): Nenita Fernandez, Sarah Jean Mallari, Ma. Loida Meimban, Alejandria Collado, Hanae Venus Bagabaldo and Kristine Marie Sabelino; (back row, from left): Noel Pamplona, Alai business director Lauro L. Abaño, Augusto Francisco, sales director Angelo M. Cabrera, AP business director Marilyn A. Mayoralgo, Lourdes De Quiroz, Marilyn De Guzman, BPI-IG president Emilio S. De Quiros Jr., Erlinda Pek, regional manager John Agustin and sales director Jose A. Montino Jr. Alai and AP are wholly owned subsidiaries of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI).

Cebu ICT 2005 to run June 22

CEBU ICT 2005, a three-day international conference and exhibition focusing on information and communications technology (ICT) and IT-enabled services (Ites), will be conducted June 22 to 24 at the Waterfront Hotel in Lahug, Cebu City. The Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) is organizing the event.

Organized in cooperation with the Department of Trade and Industry, and the Board of Investments, Cebu ICT 2005 is one of a series of activities organized by CCCI in conjunction with Cebu Business Month (CBM). CBM is an annual trade and industry festival that attracts entrepreneurs, local and foreign investors, tourists, local and national government executives.

The conference, "Asia's Emerging Role as a Global Center for ICT and IT-Enabled Services," is intended to address issues related to Asia's emergence as a technology and Ites hub.

"The conference and exhibition aims to promote Asia as a global ICT and Ites center by bringing together key ICT and Ites executives from around Asia and the world for three days of high-level discussion and interaction," said Bonifacio Belen, Cebu ICT 2005 chair.

The Philippine government will be represented by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Manuel A. Roxas, Department of Trade and Industry secretary Juan B. Santos, Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) chair Virgilio Peña, CICT commissioner Dondi Mapa, and FIT-ED director for strategic planning Luli Arroyo, Cebu governor Gwen Garcia, and Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

For more information on Cebu ICT 2005, log on to www.cebuict2005.com.

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(Sgd.) **EDITA S. BUENO**
Administrator

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SURPLUS BUNKER-C AND OTHER JUNK ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING July 12, 2005, 2:00 p.m., Solarium Hall, Bldg.-1 Grd. Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items located at various NPC stations.

	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
SCHEDULE-I		
1.	Surplus Bunker-C (dead stock volume) approximately 650,000 at Manila Thermal Power Plant Tank Nos. 2, 3, and 4. The sale of the Surplus Bunker C includes the clean up of Tank Nos. 2, 3 and 4 to make the tanks suitable for "black product". Note: Participating bidders must be DENR accredited waste oil Processors and Treaters	P 5,837,807.00/lot
SCHEDULE-II		
1.	One (1) lot of junk station batteries, Al-Cd and Ni-Cd, 157 pcs. located at Pantabangan Hydro-Electric Power Plant, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija	P 15,700.00/lot
2.	One (1) lot turbine oil and "PCB-Free" transformer oil (9 drums and 17 drums respectively) located at Pantabangan Hydro-Electric Power Plant, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija Note: Participating bidders must be DENR accredited waste oil transporter and treater for oils and industrial batteries	P 37,500.00/lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OFFER.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2004 ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY) OF THE BIDDER OR AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY AND ONE (1) COPY OF VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD LIKE DRIVER'S LICENSE, GSIS ID, SSS ID, POSTAL ID, PASSPORT, PRC ID AND COMPANY ID.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. Alfonso D. Alday, Manager, Warehousing Inventory, Traffic and Asset Disposal Division (WITADD) at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 922-8431. Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:30 p.m. July 11, 2005.

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
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(PDI - June 13, 14 & 15, 2005)

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OBITUARIES

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God saw you getting tired,
When a cure was not to be,
So he wrapped His arms around you,
And whispered, "Come to Me."
You didn't deserve what you went through,
So He gave you rest.
God's garden must be beautiful
He only picks the best.
And when I saw you sleeping,
So peaceful and free from pain,
I could not wish you back
To suffer that again.

EDUARDO "DONDI" SYQUIA ALMARIO

May 18, 1962 – June 11, 2005

He entered the Eternal Garden surrounded by his beloved
family and friends who cheered him on to follow
the Light and with the Father, Mama Mary
and all his dearly departed loved ones.

His loss is deeply felt by his mother **Pacita**
His loving companion **Otta**
His brothers and sisters
Cecile and **Alberto**
Dindo and **Beth**
Ivy and **Yong**
Chona and **Jojo**
Cynthia and **Moise**
Louie and **Rachelle**
Bobby and **Armi**

And all his nephews and nieces
Dondi's remains are in the Capilla de San Francisco
de San Antonio, Makati City.
Interment will be on Wednesday, June 15, 2005
Mass at 9:00 A.M. Cremation will follow.

FR. ROMUALDO "ROMY" C. GRAPILON, SVD

(Roxas City)
Our Filipino Missionary to Paraguay

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on June 7, 2005 at the age of 59.

Fr. Romy Grapilon was a member of the Society of the Divine Word. He was ordained as priest on June 23, 1973 at Tagaytay City. He was a missionary for 32 years in Paraguay.

Our Congregation, his relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His interment was held last Wednesday, June 8, 2005 in Obligado, Encarnación, Paraguay.

Mass will be offered for his repose on Wednesday, June 15, 2005 at 6:00 pm at Christ the King Mission Seminary, E. Rodriguez, Quezon City.

> **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."**
>
> John 3:16

"DIREK" LUIGI SANTIAGO

(DIRECTOR OF "NGINIIG")

passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on June 8, 2005 at the age of 27.

His bereaved parents, **ROGER** and **IRMA**, brothers **NICOLO** and **JAMES** and sister **ARMI**; other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal repose and happiness in heaven with God.

Funeral Mass will be at Santuario de San Antonio Church, Forbes Park at 8:15 – 9:45 am on June 14, 2005 before cremation at Loyola Guadalupe at 12:00 noon.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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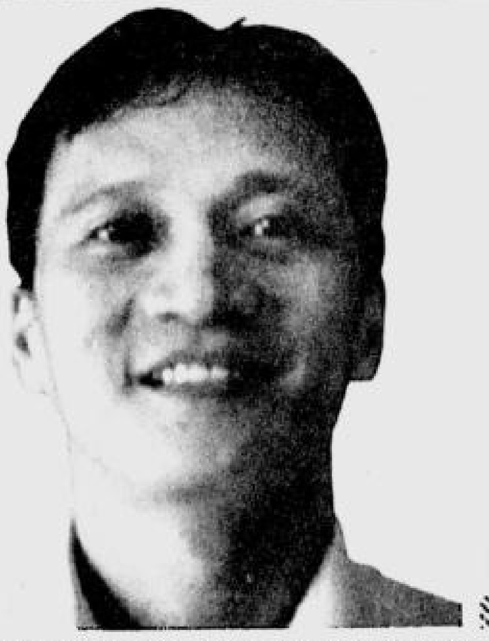
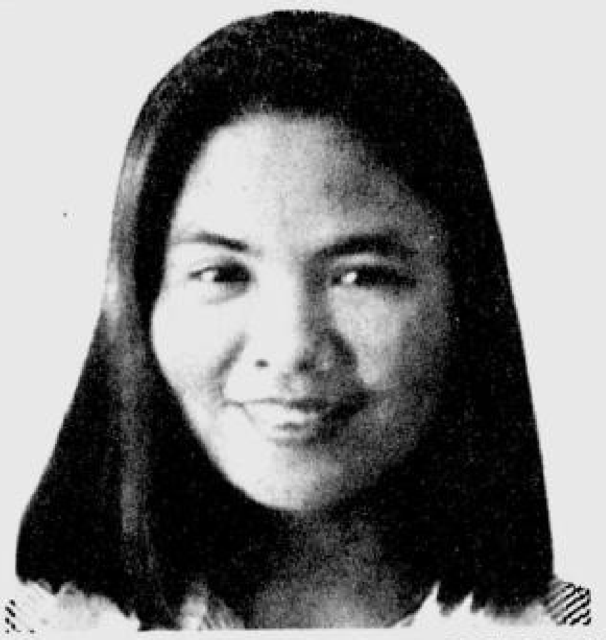


ROLAND D. PANALIGAN



MA. DOLORES T. GOMEZ

are no longer connected with **GRACE POWER HERBS INT'L INC.** with address at 115 Malakas St., Diliman, Quezon City. Effective April 30 (Ms. Gomez) and May 14, 2005 (Mr. Panaligan).

Be **FORWARNED** that any transaction or payments with **Mr. Panaligan and Ms. Gomez** in representation of **Grace Power Herbs** shall be considered unauthorized and ineffective without force and effect nor shall the same be honored by the company. Please call us at **9263252** for any information on Mr. Panaligan and Ms. Gomez.

GPHII Management

(PDI – June 13, 2005)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS
CIP COMPLEX, SERGIO OSMENA BLVD., NORTH RECLAMATION AREA, CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (032) 2323401-04, FAX NO. (032) 2321990, ppavis@globelines.com.ph

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Sealed proposals for the sale of **SCRAP ITEMS/DERELICTS** will be received at the Office of the Philippine Ports Authority, PMO-Iloilo, Baseport, Loboc, La Paz, Iloilo City, not later than June 30, 2005 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 p.m.) at which date, time and place, said disposal will be opened in the presence of bidders.

The items for public auction contain 1 lot of scrap iron/derelicts based on its actual weight as weigh in the weighing bridge of the PPA, at the minimum price of Eight Pesos and Fifty Centavos (P8.50) per kilo.

Basic Guidelines:

- Procurement of bid forms may be secured at the Senior Supply Officer from June 15 to 20, 2005,
- Payment of P200.00 which is non-refundable;
- Prospective bidders are invited to see the actual condition of the items considering that the sale shall be on "As-is-Where-Is" "Cash-and-Carry" basis;
- Pre-bidding meeting will be on **June 23, 2005 @ 3:00 p.m.** at PMO Iloilo;
- The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality found therein or accept the bid proposal which in its judgment is most advantageous to the government;
- The above-mentioned items are available for inspection at the PPA-Office, Port Management Office, Iloilo City, contact person — The Port Manager, ATTY. FERNANDO CLAVERIA.

08 June 2005, Cebu City, Philippines

(Sgd.) RAUL T. SANTOS
Port District Manager
Chairman, Disposal Committee

(PDI–June 7 & 13, 2005)

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PRISM
PRIVATE SECTOR MOBILIZATION FOR FAMILY PLANNING

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The Private Sector Mobilization for Family Planning (PRISM), a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under contract number 492-C-00-04-00036-00 and implemented by a consortium led by Chemonics International, Inc. is soliciting offers for:

Study/Survey on the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Private Sector Family Planning Providers in the Philippines

Background

The PRISM Project supports USAID/Philippines' Strategic Objective 3, desired family size and improved health sustainably achieved, focusing on three components: 1) increased **workplace** support for family planning (FP) services and referrals, 2) establishment of viable, mass **market** brands of hormonal contraceptives, and 3) increased business value of FP among **private practice** providers.
The Market Development Component (Component 2) of the project is intended to increase recognition of business opportunities in the hormonal FP commodities market in the Philippines and to motivate businesses to take advantage of those opportunities.

Qualification Requirements

- Must be a Philippine – based market research company, foundation, or NGO with capability of conducting surveys, duly registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission and majority owned by Filipino or U.S. citizens;
- Must have a proven track record in conducting quantitative studies or surveys in the field of family planning;
- Must have a team of qualified personnel and sufficient resources to manage and execute the project; and
- Must be in operation for the past 5 years.

Interested parties may get in touch with Ms. Vivien S. Cabanban, Subcontract Specialist at (02) 490-0060 to 65 or 635-2397 and request a copy of the Request for Proposal. You may also email: **vcabanban@prism.org.ph.**

The deadline for submission of proposals is on or before 11:00 A.M, June 30, 2005.

The Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on June 21, 2005 from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the PRISM Office, 23rd Floor, Wynsum Corporate Plaza, 22 F. Ortigas Jr. Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

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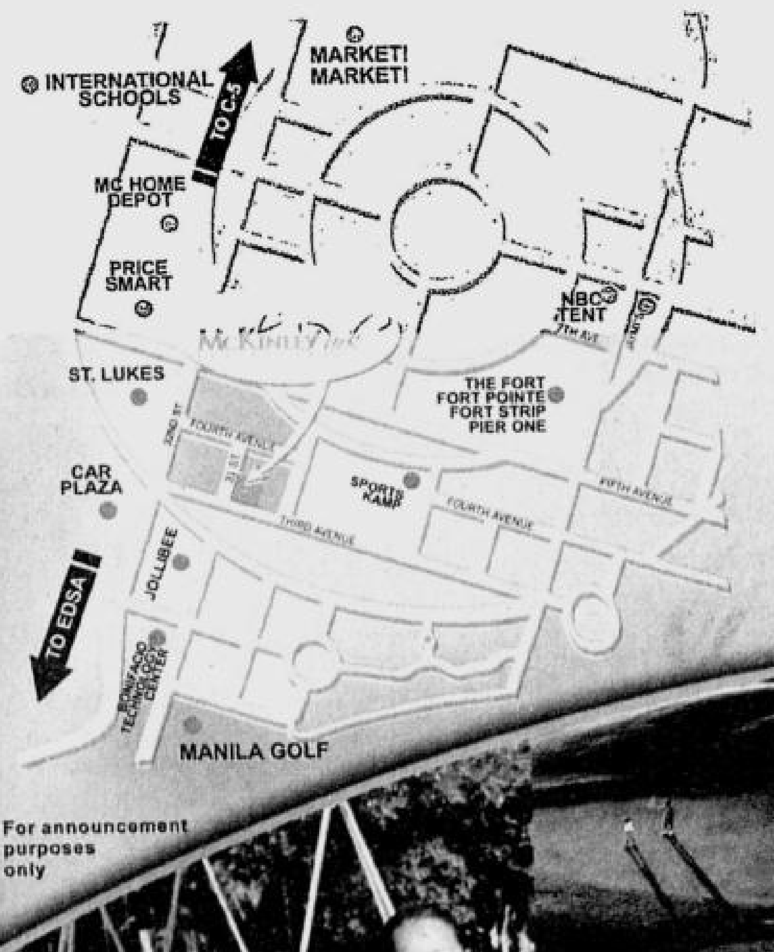
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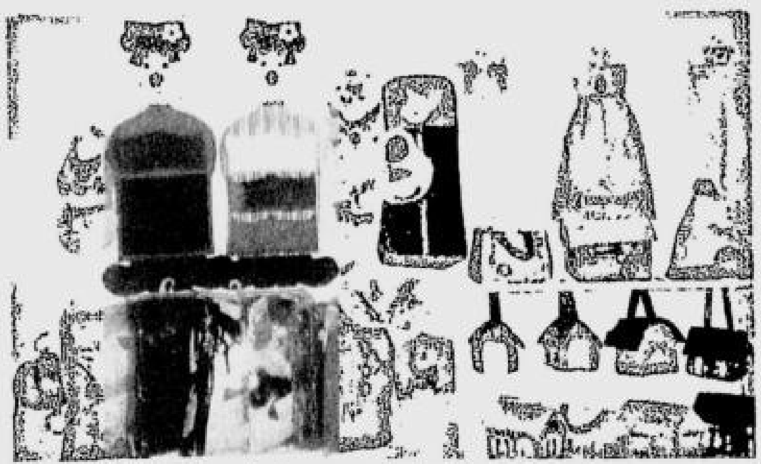
Doctor and nurse find politics and economics do mix

By Ian Jester M. de Vera
Contributor, UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries

ASK a businessman what his motivation for starting a business is, and some of the likely answers are—to provide for the family, to become rich, to release creative energies, to feel a sense of accomplishment, to apply a skill or experience, etc. Exceptionally, you will find someone who would say that he went into business to help people help themselves.

The Cuchapins of Tarlac belong to this exceptional breed of entrepreneurs.

THE CUCHAPINS—Cesar, Bing and sons



CB CREATIVITY Products are marketed abroad.

Political turmoil

After finishing nursing 1971, Severa "Bing" Falguera worked as a staff nurse at the Marian General Hospital in Manila. It was there that she met a young resident doctor, Cesar Cuchapin. A year later they got married and moved to Tarlac, his home province.

Soon Cesar put up a small clinic, their means of livelihood. Bing managed the clinic while taking care of their two sons.

It was an idyllic time for the couple. "Life seemed so simple and peaceful," Bing recalls. The "bubble" broke in 1984 when Cesar became the chair of the National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), a voluntary, non-partisan organization working for honest and orderly elections.

It was a time of turmoil. Political rivalry between former dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his opponents was fever pitch. Since Cesar was at the center of the fire and both he and Bing wanted to protect their children from some real or imagined danger, they sent their two sons to the United States, where they continued their studies. Bing had to go, too, to look after them.

When political turmoil subsided after the first Edsa revolution in 1986, mother and children returned. It was probably because of Cesar's stint in Namfrel that he was appointed by the revolutionary government to take over Paniqui, Tarlac, as officer in charge. His mayoralty obtained a more formal status when he ran and won as mayor in 1988.

Public service

Bing experienced how it was to be a mayor's wife. Over 90 percent of Cesar's constituency was the poor, undereducated and unemployed. Many of them cued up not only at the Mayor's office but also his residence to ask for jobs, scholarships and financial assistance. As Mayor, Cesar could only do so much. For her part, Bing had ideas on how she could help.

A business will generate jobs and income and will help prosper the community. A business can catalyze the creation and growth of other businesses they are linked with as suppliers or buyers. A business, especially one set up in a small town, can prevent rural people from leaving their homes to migrate to the big cities. All these Bing thought about.

It was not too difficult deciding what business to venture in.

Socially-oriented business

As she had a sewing machine then, she thought of producing machine-sewn products. As she did not have sewing skills, she hired an experienced seamstress. Bing herself created the designs and made the pattern for her first product-throw pillows.

She admits she only chose throw pillows because of her fascination with their beauty and she just thought of making her own.

She was further encouraged to continue her business when her elder sister migrated to America, turning over to her a small business in crocheting that tapped home-based workers in Paniqui as subcontractors. Also left with Bing were two sewing machines.

She called her first business Dos Niños, for her two sons. She picked up where her sister left off. Bing engaged home workers and brought their finished products to principals in Manila. The inexperienced Bing suffered quality problems. She had a high rate of rejects. "Crocheting has the disadvantage of inconsistency," she explains. "If a needle worker is overworked or problematic, her performance is affected and it shows in the product."

She paid her workers in full. But in turn she was not paid by her principals when the output was rejected. She incurred heavy losses and a debt of about P40,000. Eventually, she stopped producing.

Meanwhile, Cesar remained in public service. He was reelected mayor in 1992 and again in 1995.

People kept on coming in droves for financial help. As many of them left empty-handed, Bing was all the more determined "to teach them how to fish."

Learning from the failure of Dos Niños, she stayed away from handmade production this time. Machine-made items would stand a better chance in the export market, she decided. All she had to reckon with was having the right pattern and the correct measurements.

With the help of the Department of Trade and Industry and the local government of Tarlac, some of the constituents were trained in embroidery and high-speed sewing. They comprised the first workers of CB Creativity, the new business Bing put up in 1990 in line with the livelihood program of Paniqui.

CB, short for "Cuchapin Brothers," is the "offspring" of Dos Niños and thus adopted the old logo bearing the silhouette of two boys holding each other. Just to learn export marketing, Bing started the business by accepting subcontracted work from a Pampanga-based export company manufacturing educational toys.

At the moment CB Creativity manufactures soft educational toys, baby accessories, quilts, Christmas decors and other products made of polyester, cotton, felt and Tetoron. As a member of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc., and the Philippine Toy and Novelty Manufacturers Association Inc. (where Bing is the vice president), it has exported to the United States, Europe and Japan.

It is said that behind every man is a supportive woman. In the Cuchapins' case, this was true… and vice versa.

In 2001 Bing found herself up to her neck with job orders. Since Cesar had already retired from politics by then and was no longer practicing medicine, she sent an SOS to him. When Cesar gave a hand, she felt a huge load was taken off her back

While Bing is the president and general manager of CB Creativity, Cesar is the consultant. But unlike before when he only got involved when asked, Cesar has learned the ropes of the business. Whenever Bing is abroad, Cesar ably takes charge of operations.

An experienced entrepreneur himself, having run a drug company while still practicing medicine, Cesar helps Bing in financial management. She is the final boss, however—and the sole signatory of checks.

In business and in love

For Bing the best part of being a couple in business is having someone around who can help solve a problem. "Both spouses have a shared responsibility for solving a problem quickly and efficiently."

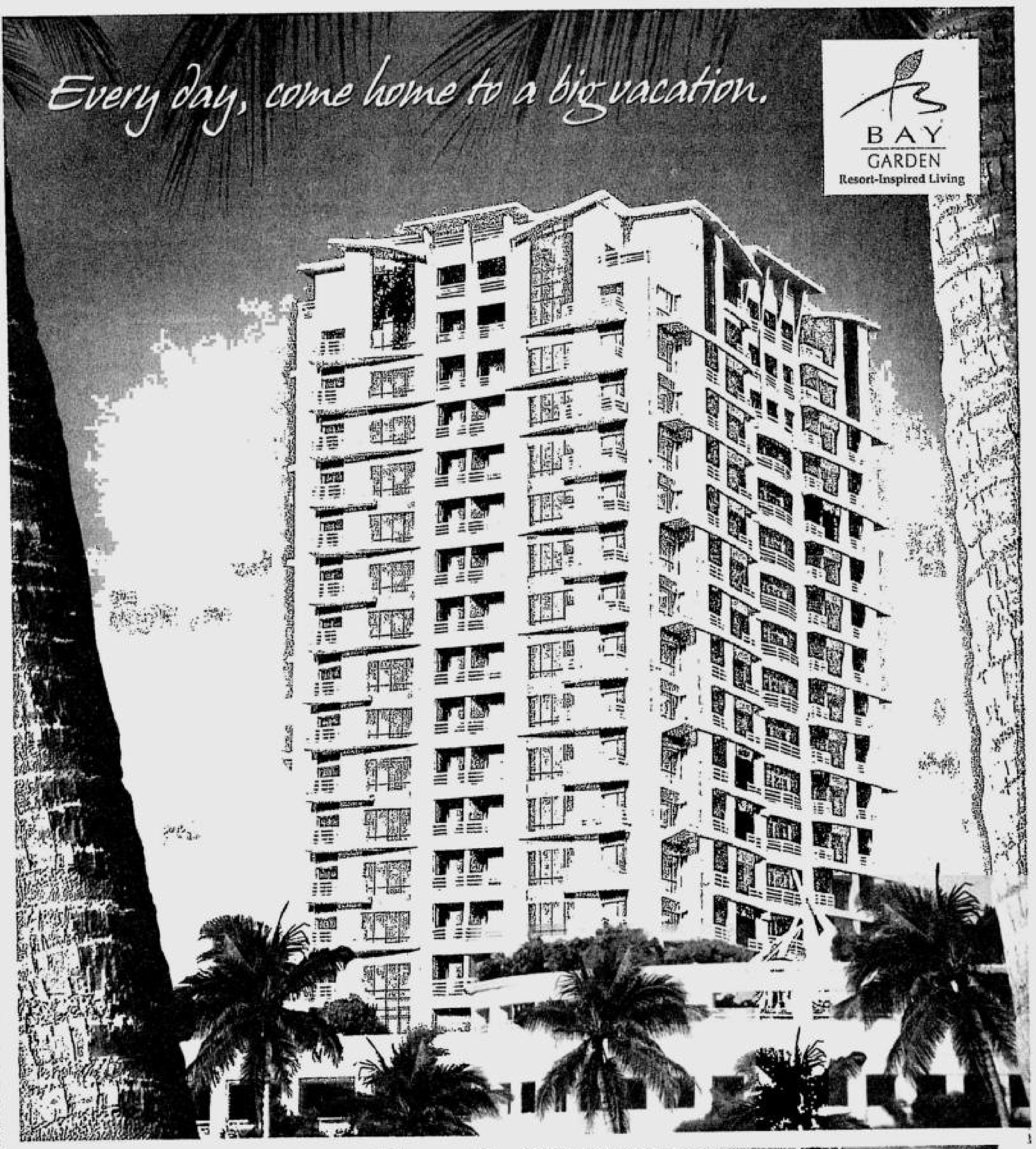
Cesar and Bing have opposite temperaments. At times, their ideas clash.

Bing advises other couples in business to discuss any disagreements dispassionately "before a problem blows over."

She claims she and her husband never had any serious quarrel despite different temperaments. "If we had, then many people would have been affected," she explains "my children, our family, our workers, our constituents." They have thus agreed not to quarrel because of the potential domino effect.

"First and foremost, if you are planning to start a business as a couple, you should know what you are getting yourselves into. It's best you plan and manage as a team," she advises other couples aspiring to be in business.

(Check out the UP ISSI's Appreciation Course on Entrepreneurship to be conducted on June 24 and the Production Management Course and the Strategic Marketing Course which will both start on July 2. Please contact Ms Tes Santos at 928-7076 to 79 or e-mail training.issi@up.edu.ph.)



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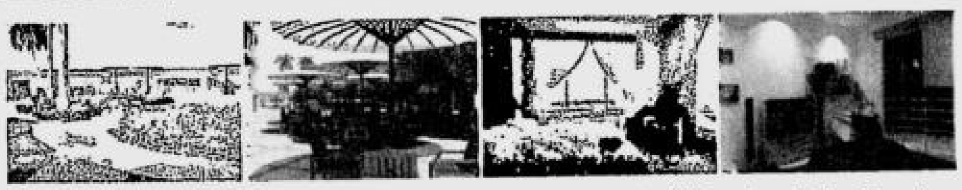

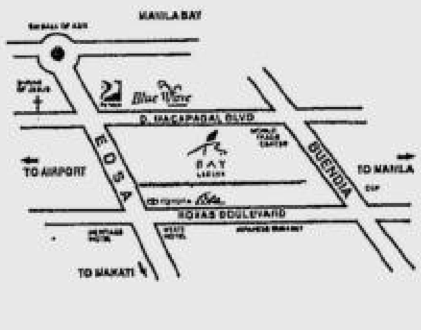

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No research yet on new Intel chips for Mac PCs

By Leo Magno

SANTA CLARA, California—Intel Corp. has yet to discuss with Apple Computer Inc. regarding possible new processors for the next generation of Macintosh computers.

Apple CEO Steve Jobs shocked the computer world Monday when he announced that Macintosh computers, which have for more than a decade been running on PowerPC chips supplied by International Business Machines Corp. and Freescale Semiconductors Inc., would be migrated to x86-based Intel processors starting mid-2006.

It is unclear, however, whether Apple would be using processors from Intel's current line or a totally new platform, similar to when IBM co-developed the PowerPC chip with Apple and Motorola 12 years ago.

"We haven't started conducting any research on new processors for the Mac," said Kevin Kahn, Intel senior fellow and director of the company's Communications Technology Lab. Kahn heads Intel's research laboratory on various fields, including platform and microprocessor development. "In fact, we were as surprised as anybody when (the shift from IBM to Intel chips) was announced. But we were of course excited when Apple said they would use our products."

One thing which may have attracted Apple to Intel is the latter's recent breakthroughs in microprocessor technology. Kahn's research lab, for instance, on Feb. 17 this year was able to produce the world's first continuous silicon laser. Silicon photonics marries the current silicon and electronics processes with optics technology, heralding the start of a new era in computing through optical processing and communications. Such processors, said Kahn, may be ready for production within the decade.

Whether or not Apple would use chips based on Intel's silicon photonics research, Intel said it would welcome Apple into the family "whole-heartedly."

"Apple said it would use our products and we're happy with that," Kahn said. "We would support them the way we always do all of our customers."

Apple's use of x86-based Intel chips breaks one of the most crucial digital divides in the industry. Intel processors running on Microsoft Corp.'s Windows software dominate the PC industry, resulting in a near-duopoly called "Wintel" by the industry. Meanwhile, Apple remains a niche player with only 2.3 percent of new personal computers shipped in the first three months of the year, according to figures from International Data Corp. However, the Macintosh has an extremely loyal fan base that keeps Apple in a league of its own.

Meanwhile, Apple allayed fears of compatibility issues when it announced that a company called Transitive Technologies is providing them with technology that allows old Macintosh software to run on computers based on Intel's x86 processors rather than PowerPC chips from IBM. The solution will be part of a group of software called Rosetta, which will work on current Macintosh OS X programs but not for older software running on OS 8 or OS 9, according to Apple.

Some see the switch to Intel as Apple's fall into the "dark side" of personal computing, but Intel executives who requested anonymity said that Intel's processor prices may have been more "attractive" than that of IBM. This could lead to more competitively priced consumer products from Apple.

The executive added that Intel's focus on mobility and wireless computing, founded on the Centrino and XScale platforms, may have attracted Apple to consider Intel. Last year, Apple publicly complained about order shortages of IBM's G5 chips, and the fact that the G5 generated too much heat, something that would not sit well in laptop products. Meanwhile, Intel has been selling the Centrino chip as one which manages power and heat to become suitable for mobile computers. Centrino-based Apple products could result in smaller and thinner Macs, and Apple has been known to come up with such products as the one-piece iMac and the Mac mini.

While Intel is celebrating, the biggest loser in this game is IBM, which has been blamed for the fact that Apple computers have been trailing behind PCs in the clock-speed race. Orders for Apple's PowerPC chips represent 5 percent of the capacity of IBM's costly chip production plant in New York. But beyond profits, IBM loses prestige even more with the departure of Apple from its fold and lost confidence in its processor technology.

Behringer set to expand R&D lab in RP

By Erwin Lemuel Oliva
Contributor

THE GERMAN professional audio equipment manufacturer Behringer is set to expand its research and development facility in the Philippines in the next two years, its chair and founder told local reporters this week. Operating for more than a year in the country, this research and development facility will be hiring 200 to 250 more people to add to its present 75 Filipino engineers and graphic designers.

Uli Behringer, chair of the Behringer Group of Companies, says the latter have been developing different audio equipment products with German designers.

Their 1,500-square meter facility is now the main R&D lab of Behringer worldwide, said Behringer, both a sound engineer by training and a classical pianist with a passion for jazz.

The Philippine facility currently oversees the mechanical, electronics and graphic design of most of the firm's products, from guitar amplifiers to stomp boxes and other professional audio and music equipment for sound engineers.

"I lived in Hong Kong for seven years before I decided to move to the Philippines to retire," 44-year-old Behringer recalled as he shared snippets of the local facility's brief history and his own career.

In the Philippines, he found himself jamming with Filipino musicians until he decided to move his R&D lab from Germany to the Philippines last year. "I'm now leading this facility," he said.

"The company is growing like crazy. In the recent NAMM show (the biggest guitar shows in the United States), we launched 78 products, a first for any manufacturer," Behringer said.

With $170 million in revenue last year and growing at 40 percent, the young founder and executive said the company has grown fast due to its affordable quality products.

Behringer now has 2,500 employees in five continents, with products distributed in 107 countries.

In the early '90s, he moved the company's sourcing and manufacturing arm to China—a pioneering move that has had industry leaders following suit a decade later.

With an R&D lab in the Philippines now, he expects to achieve the economies of scale the company needs to compete with well-known top of the line brands in the music industry.

Microsoft

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–Laura DiDio, The Yankee Group, April 2004
"Free Software", Unix, and Windows TCO Comparison

The Yankee Group, a global research and consulting firm, concluded that a significant switch to "free software" from Windows or Unix could cost three to four times as much without delivering tangibly better performance or business value. These findings are based on a non-sponsored worldwide survey of 1,000 IT administrators and C-level executives in midsized and large enterprises.

To get the full study, visit **microsoft.com/getthefacts**

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Microsoft® Windows Server System™

Microsoft Business Solutions doubles customer base in the Philippines

18% global growth of three times industry average

Makati City, Philippines - Microsoft Business Solutions grew its customer base in the Philippines by more than 50% in 2004, ending the year with around 400 customers. Globally, Microsoft Business Solutions has over 332,000 current customers.

Microsoft Business Solutions experienced global growth of 18% year-on-year in an industry segment that is growing between only 4 to 6%.

"Companies evaluate business applications based on five key criteria - software that is functionally rich; highly adaptable to changing business needs; meets their specific industry needs; is affordable; and easy to learn and use," said TJ Javier, General Manager, Microsoft Philippines. "We are enjoying phenomenal success precisely because Microsoft Business Solutions meet all of these criteria and offer better business value as compared to other solutions."

Microsoft Business Solutions currently has 14 active partners in the Philippines. "Our goal is to deliver maximum business value to our customers by establishing a broad ecosystem of partners to help develop and deliver vertical solutions that deeply integrate with our business applications and infrastructure platform," he adds.

One company that has benefited from this strong partner support is JS Unitrade Merchandising Inc, a nationwide distributor of personal care products such as Prokids Premium Baby diapers and Charmee feminine protection products. JS Unitrade recently upgraded its accounting and distribution process with Microsoft Business Solutions Solomon. "We decided to invest on Microsoft technology for its ability to quickly adapt to our existing processes and for its ease of use. Microsoft Business Solutions Solomon allowed us to dramatically improve our accounting and distribution process in a cost-effective way," said Edwin Aguilar, associate IT manager of JS Unitrade Merchandise Inc.

To support the growing appetite for specialized vertical industry specific IT solutions of the local mid-sized and small business segment, Microsoft also launched Navision 4.0 recently, the first major upgrade to the industry leading enterprise applications suite created specifically for SMBs. Navision 4.0 integrates critical financial, manufacturing, distribution, customer management, supply chain, analytics and e-commerce data into one streamlined solution. In addition, it can be implemented rapidly, customized and maintained with minimal disruption to the business.

Navision 4.0, along with the other components of Microsoft Business Solutions, will be customized and distributed through Microsoft's strong partner network throughout the region. Many companies are often aware of the benefits offered by IT, but do not know where to get the right information and advice. In this instance, partners become a key source of information and counsel for small businesses as they are closer to the ground and possess a deeper knowledge of the customer's business. The new Navision 4.0 will allow Microsoft's partners to offer the most innovative business solutions for small businesses today.

"Microsoft is deeply committed to creating and supporting innovative products that offer compelling business value," said Tep Misa, Director, Small and Mid Market Segment and Partners, Microsoft Philippines. "We are delivering on our product roadmap as promised, and in the past 90 days, have launched the latest releases of the flagship Navision and Great Plains solutions. We are also continuing to innovate in Axapta and industry-leading Microsoft CRM, with new releases planned during the next 12 months."

About Microsoft Business Solutions

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Not your traditional retail banker

ANONAS

THERE is no doubt that the lifeblood of every organization is the people behind it. In an industry like banking that faces fierce competition, it is not enough to have brilliant minds under one's wings to make things work. Sometimes creativity and out-of-the-box thinking is required to propel the institution towards profitability and stability, eventually enjoying market preference.

East West Bank, positioning itself as the country's "preferred consumer bank," attests to the might of creative thinking. The bank, now on its 10th year, continues to post impressive growth, with resources up by 17 percent over last year. As of the first quarter of 2005, resources stood at over P26 billion, topping records in the previous years.

One major driver to East West Bank's growth is Retail Banking. In this area, much of the credit is given to Gerardo "Gerry" B. Anonas, the bank's executive vice president and retail banking group head.

"When I came in, we were looking for an increase in size. East West Bank had 39 branches but deposits were minimal, we were not efficient then. So we went after volume, we separated branch marketing from operations so that branch managers and marketing officers can concentrate on sales," shares Anonas who joined East West Bank in 1998.

With Anonas heading the retail banking team, East West Bank started to experience an average growth rate of close to 30 percent in the past five and one half years, bringing the deposit level of about P6 Billion in 1999 to over P22 billion today.

People management

Transcending beyond figures, Anonas considers people management as an important contribution to the Bank. "The transformation of branch banking officers and staff from competent operations people to marketing oriented employees and eventually to entrepreneur-like managers who are expected to bring down costs, optimize business volumes and branch profitability, is an achievement," he adds.

Presently, East West Bank's network totals 67 branches. The Gotianun-owned bank targets 4 additional branches by year-end, and 7 more in 2006, with the hope of bringing the branch level to 100 in the next few years.

As EVP, Anonas is in charge of the bank's 67 branches with the responsibility of deposit generation, origination of consumer (mortgage) loans and private banking business. He manages close to 58 percent of the bank's workforce.

"I was never a traditional banker. I got into branch banking much later than the rest of my peers in other banks. I had different ideas from traditional bankers," adds Anonas whose first encounter with the Gotianun family was when he joined as management trainee of the accounts management group of the Insular Bank of Asia and America (IBAA), a bank that was majority owned by the Gotianuns.

Anonas recalls how he rose from the ranks and earned the trust of the Gotianuns back in IBAA. "After one year of not showing any growth from the previous year, I was made to work within a budget of people and resources. There were doubts if what I was doing was right or wrong. But the management stuck with me, espe-

NOT YOUR/ B2-4

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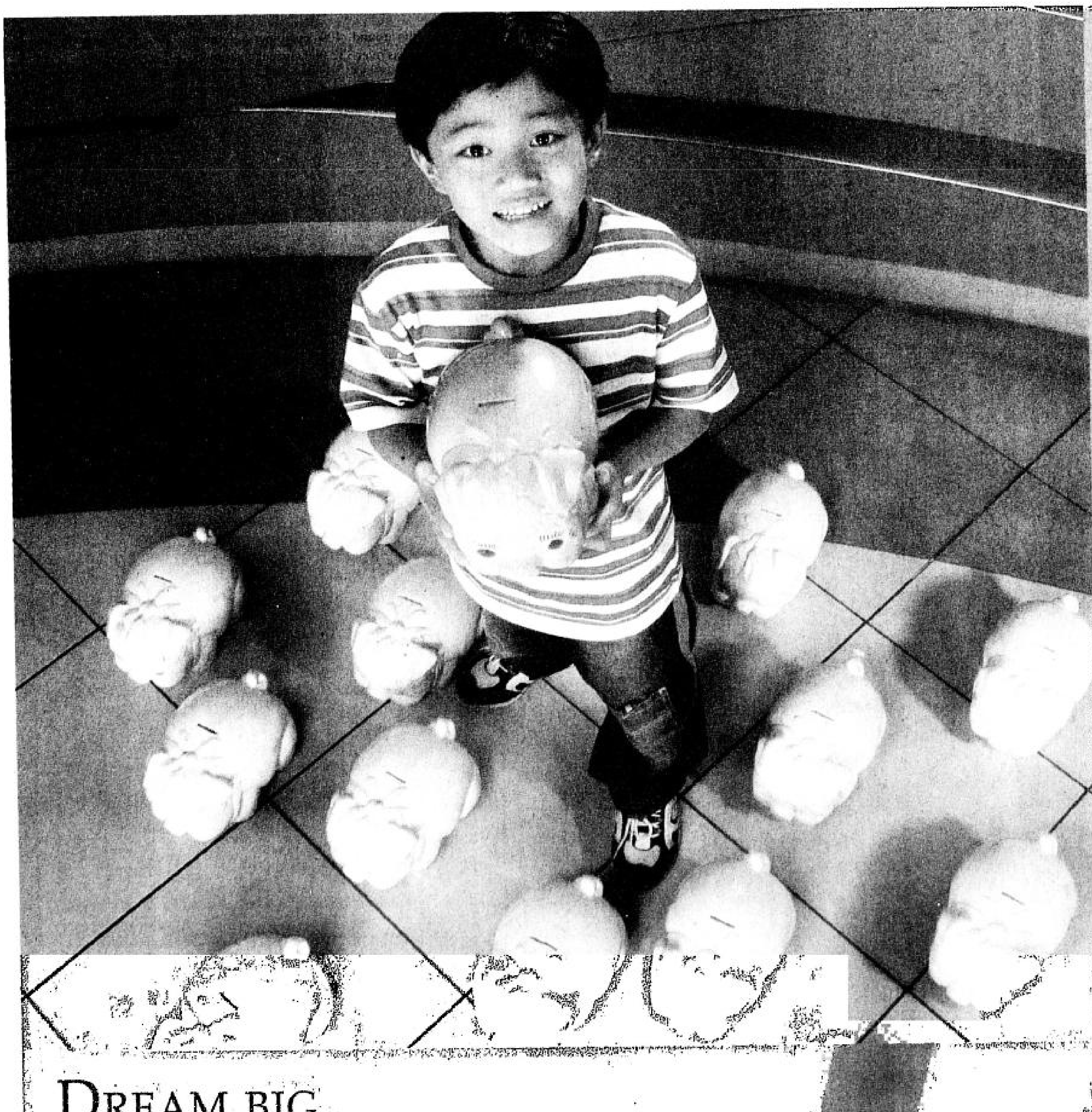

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Avoiding 'mental flabbiness'

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

I HAVE a designated "thinking chair" in my office.

I don't sit in it when someone drops by to talk. I don't take power naps in it. I use it only for thinking.

This chair doesn't think for me, but it does speak to me every now and then. If I've gone a few days without sitting in it, its presence subtly reminds me that I'm not devoting enough time to the all-important task of thinking.

When we fail to make thinking a priority, we develop what author Gordon MacDonald calls "mental flabbiness." This may not sound like a life-threatening condition, but some ways, it can be quite dangerous. Here's how MacDonald explains it:

"In our pressurized society, people who are out of shape mentally usually fall victim to ideas and systems that are destructive to the human spirit and to the human relationship," he writes. "They are victimized because they have not taught themselves how to think, nor have they set themselves to the lifelong pursuit of growth of the mind. Not having the faculty of a strong mind, they grow dependent upon the thoughts and opinions of others. Rather than deal with ideas and issues, they reduce themselves to lives full of rules, regulations and programs."

You can't be an effective leader with a mindset like that—it's just not possible.

Fortunately, there is an antidote to mental flabbiness: making time to think. I realize this can be a daunting assignment for people whose schedules are already bursting at the seams. And yet, when we don't make thinking a priority, we're actually sabotaging our own creativity and success.

Think about it. One of the highest commodities in a person's life is a great idea. A great idea has transforming power. It can take you places you may never have dreamed of going. But great ideas don't come out of nowhere. They begin as thoughts. So it stands to reason that the more time we spend thinking, the more great ideas we'll have.

The good news is that it doesn't take hours of thinking each day to generate ideas and stay in good mental shape. You can accomplish a great deal in a few moments of concentrated, intentional thought.

Let me give you two examples of how this works in my life. Every morning, I devote three minutes to what I call "big-picture thinking." I look at my schedule for the day and ask myself one simple question: What's the main event? Of all the things I'm going to do, of all the people I'm going to see, of all the experiences that I'm going to encounter, what's the main event?

You can't prioritize your day if you don't see everything in your day. That's why I practice big-picture thinking in the morning. I have to pick out my main event early, because whatever it is, that's where I had better be at my best. I'm human, and I don't always hit the ball out of the park. Sometimes I don't hit the ball at all. But at the main event, I had better hit a homerun. Big-picture thinking helps me achieve that goal.

At the end of the day, I spend another 5 to 10 minutes doing what I refer to as "reflective thinking." I go to my thinking chair and spend time reviewing my whole day. I ask myself questions such as, "Who did I see today? How did I add value to those people? What lessons did I learn?" Reflective thinking doesn't take long, but it's an incredibly valuable exercise because it turns experience into insight.

Can you imagine what would happen in your life if you practiced big-picture and reflective thinking? You would stop wasting time on things that don't really matter, which would give you more energy for the really important activities. You would be more organized and efficient. You would experience less stress. Most importantly, you would also take more away from each day that would enable you to lead better the next day.

The best way to start this process is to designate a specific place to think. It doesn't matter if your "thinking chair" is in your den at home or your office at work. It just has to be a spot where you can do nothing but think for a few moments twice a day.

The bottom line is this: If you find a place to think your thoughts, you'll have more thoughts. If you find a place to shape your thoughts, you will have better thoughts. And if you find a place to stretch your thoughts, you will have bigger thoughts.

All this, from just three minutes in the morning and five to ten minutes at night. As you can see, the results far outweigh the time investment.

Email your comments or questions for Dr. Maxwell c/o Maxwell@inspire.ph or slvguru@pldtdsl.net. For more information on attending leadership workshops designed and licensed by John Maxwell in the Philippines email us or call 830-2191 or 8132732/03 and ask for Gina or Jenny.

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Not your traditional retail banker

From page B2-3

cially the President and the Gotianun family, who talked to the stockholders," he muses.

This explains Anonas' fruitful relationship with the Gotianuns that even after he left IBAA and joined other banks, he carried with him the principals' trust when he joined East West Bank in 1998, this time with a more pressing responsibility of bringing the bank to greater heights.

"They brought me in for a purpose, to do marketing for them. It was not easy because we have to train, to move people around where they can be more efficient. It also took a lot of product development. I told them I needed three years to reshape the organization, review the products, implement the plan, and good enough, we were able to double our target," explains Anonas.

Anonas, who brought with him experiences in account management, credit administration and business development to East West Bank, sees rosier years ahead for East West Bank as he lauds the top management's support and openness to innovation.

"We have successfully moved forward. Since we are currently happy with our size, we are now concentrating more on developing further our retail and consumer business and how to grow the right way. We've set an ambitious target of 40 percent growth this year. More importantly, we have set ambitious targets in terms of net income. Currently, we are implementing a lot of strategies that will develop the bank's niche businesses over the long term," affirms Anonas.

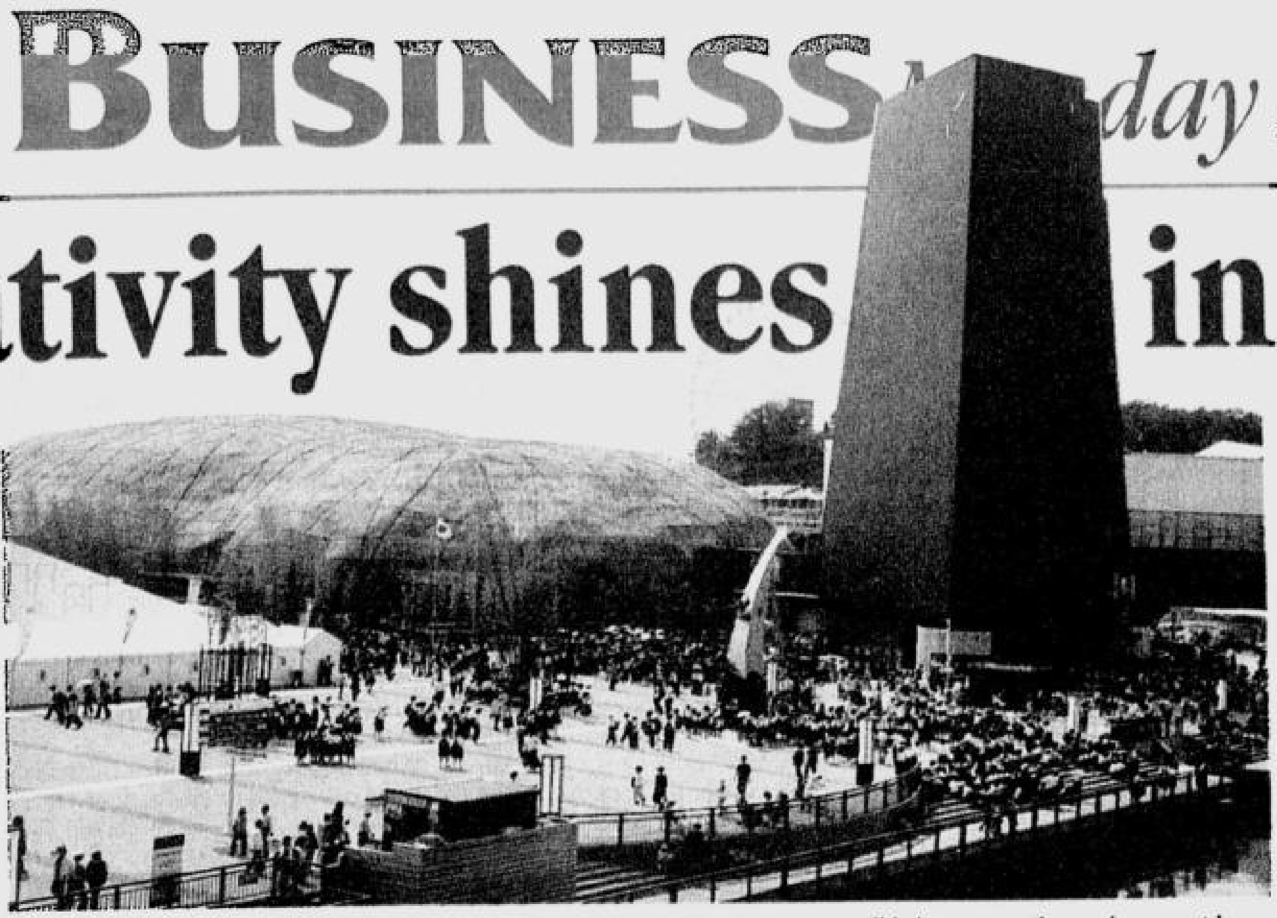
"Within the next few months, you can expect to see more out-of-the-box marketing and sales programs that we will implement for the benefit of our customers," ends Anonas.

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

RP creativity shines in Aichi



THE EXPO site, which covers 173 hectares, was constructed with minimum possible impact on the environment in order to fully express the event's theme: Nature's Wisdom.

PHOTOS BY CHARLES BUBAN

By Ronnel W. Domingo

IN THE central region of Asia's largest and most advanced economy, a small collection of novelties is making waves in the first-ever gathering of such exhibits from all over the world in the 21st century.

The place is Aichi prefecture (province) in Japan and people—locals and foreigners alike—are making a beeline for the Philippine Pavilion that won a gold prize in the Nature's Wisdom Award in the ongoing 2005 World Expo.

Even to this Pinoy writer's eyes, the facade of the pavilion is confusing at first glance. What on earth is this supposed to look like?

After a quick scan of the brochure: *Oo nga ano?*

"The facade ... is executed in woven (aluminum) strips with perforations depicting a cross-section of the coconut. Architecturally figured as weaving, the facade's thin plaited strips exhibit laser cut words in pre-colonial Philippine script and in Japanese, which form part of an ancient Philippine poem."

The verse, composed by the Hanunoo Mangyan of Mindoro, begins:

We are fireflies.../
Says the shiny firefly/
looking at the woodpecker;

Expos in history

International exhibitions have made a mark, if not shaped, the history of our country.

In the General Exposition of Fine Arts held in Madrid in 1884, Juan Luna—a certain indio from one of Spain's colonies—won one of three gold medals for his "Spoliarium."

The drive for national identity in Luna's and his contemporaries went into high gear during the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris, which commemorated the centennial of the French Revolution and introduced the Eiffel Tower.

More than a century hence, the ilustrados' Propaganda Movement seemed to have paid off with the country no longer merely a bunch of islands somewhere in the Pacific, and the word Filipino no longer eliciting blank stares.

AT THE Aichi expo, people—locals and foreigners alike—make a beeline for the Philippine Pavilion that won a gold prize.

In the Aichi Expo—themed Nature's Wisdom to nurture co-existence of nature and humankind—the Philippines bested 30 other exhibitors for the gold prize in the one-module category.

The silver prize went to the Morocco pavilion while the bronze went to the New Zealand pavilion.

The biggest exhibits take up four modules (with the gold prize going to Republic of Korea), while others partner in joint pavilions.

To stress the earth-friendly theme, pavilions use technology and engineering savvy to produce marvels such as the Japan Pavilion Nagakute, which looks like a gigantic upside down basket and the Toyota group's Natural-cycle Earth Pavilion whose frame was built with steel bars with minimized bolt holes to allow for recycling, and whose walls were built with paper and plant material.

By design, the entire expo site "would return to the forest," which it was before the exhibition was put up.

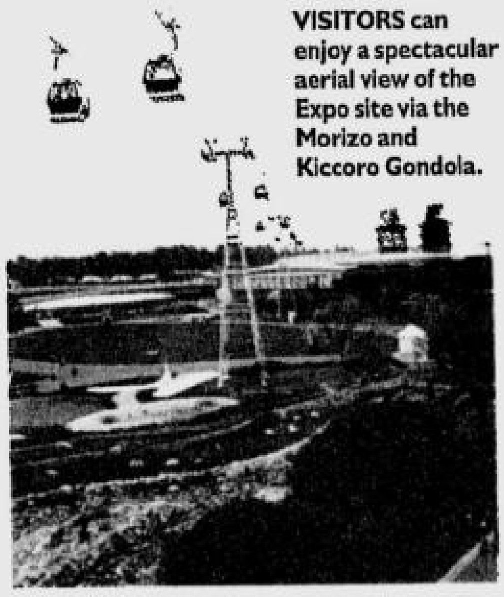
Criteria for judgment

According to the expo organizers, each pavilion was strictly evaluated in terms of the quality of the interior and exterior décor and exhibits, relation of the theme with the physical display, functionality, cleanness and so on.

Jerome B. Diaz, a project assistant with the Philippine inter-agency preparatory committee for the Aichi Expo, said the Philippine exhibit was drawing an average of 9,000 to 15,000 a day.

"Ours is one of the more visited pavilions in the (Southeast Asia and Oceania cluster)," Diaz said. "Surveys say the most visited Southeast Asian exhibit is that of Singapore with 17,000 to 20,000 people a day."

Nature's Wisdom is a fusion of the past and the future. In Aichi, the Philippine pavilion serves the contrast between treasured tradition and cutting edge technology.



VISITORS can enjoy a spectacular aerial view of the Expo site via the Morizo and Kiccoro Gondola.

As leading hi-tech firms displayed their brainchildren, like the Toyota group's futuristic personal transport called "i-unit" (some sort of a cross between a wheel chair and a sports car), visitors could marvel at the micro craftsmanship of pre-Hispanic jewelry made with yet "unknown goldsmithing techniques executed at an infinitesimally small scale."

To and from the expo site, visitors can take Japan's first magnetic levitation monorail or fuel-cell hybrid buses.

In the Philippine pavilion themed "Usbong: Seeds of Life," they marvel at the geotextile—woven coconut choir used in many parts of the world as bio-engineered barrier to arrest soil erosion.

From one area of the sprawling expo site to another, people line up for a ride on the driverless Intelligent Multimode Transport System, a very advanced bus also developed by the Toyota group, along with the hybrid bus.

In the pavilion, they enter a spherical shelter made up of 76,000 tiles from 38,000 coconuts. Inside, they are welcomed by the scent of essential oils of sampaguita and ilang-ilang, then

RP CREATIVITY/ B3-3

DERRICK C. ESTRELLA
year old
Mechanical Engineer in Brunei
HERO

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Why litigate? Arbitrate!

MAPping THE FUTURE

Custodio O. Parlade

I. JUSTICE delayed is justice denied. The question is often asked whether there is not in fact a denial of justice when civil disputes are resolved by a trial court for five years on the average. Trial court dockets are hopelessly clogged. There are more cases being filed than are being resolved. In addition, more than 30 percent of the salas of trial judges are vacant. The salary of a trial judge is not attractive enough to most lawyers. And yet as we grow in population and our economy improves, the number of commercial transactions will correspondingly increase. An important obstruction to the growth of business is the manner and speed by which commercial disputes are resolved.

Commercial disputes are unavoidable. A breach of contract may be the result of willful or negligent failure to comply with a contractual undertaking. It may also be due to circumstances beyond the control of the party in breach. The financial crisis of 1995-1996 saw even big companies fly to the Securities and Exchange Commission to seek protection against being declared insolvent. That is why lawyers always envision what is known as the worst-case scenario: What happens if, in spite of their good intentions and sincere desire to comply with their contractual commitments, parties they fail to do so.

Many cases are brought to court. However, court dockets are clogged. It is no longer unusual for a judge to have a caseload of 500 cases. This accounts for the long delay of the judge in trying and deciding a case. One alternative that a business executive may wish to consider is arbitration. Arbitration is a private process of dispute resolution whereby parties submit their dispute to a private individual chosen by them directly or indirectly for hearing and binding decision.

Advantages

There are advantages to using arbitration. First, it is a speedy process. This stems from the simple fact that an arbitrator often has only one case at a time to hear and resolve. As a rule, no postponement of the hearing will be allowed. Only one day of continuous hearing lasting from six to eight hours is oftentimes sufficient. Decisions or awards can be released in six months or less. The MWSS cases involving Manila Water Co. and later Maynilad Water Co. were submitted to arbitration. The issues were technical and the amounts involved were very substantial. They were resolved in approximately one year from the first day of hearing.

The proceeding is speedy without sacrificing the right of parties to due process of law. The arbitrator receives all the evidence submitted by the parties usually employing a fast-track process. The testimony of a witness is produced in the form of affidavits and counter-affidavits. Documents are attached to these affidavits to support the statements of fact of the affiants. The rules of evidence under the law are applied although they are liberally construed. The right to counsel and the right to cross-examine witnesses are respected and observed. Cases are not decided on position papers only. The decision of the arbitrators is reasoned and is based on the applicable law and the facts established during the hearing.

Many parties and their lawyers who have used arbitration expressed satisfaction over the process. Even those who had openly expressed misgivings about a private process of dispute settlement became purveyors of the good news about arbitration as the better alternative to litigation.

II. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Arbitration is reliable and the result is often more satisfactory than litigation.

When a party sues another in court, the case is assigned to a judge after a raffle. The judge is therefore chosen by chance, not by the parties. In contrast, the parties choose the arbitrator. Because the parties have the right to choose their arbitrators, as early as the execution of the arbitration agreement, they can prescribe the desired qualifications of the arbitrators who may be appointed for the dispute. Often appointed as arbitrators are those with subject matter expertise. It is not unusual to have doctors in a panel to decide a medical malpractice case, or an engineer or architect to decide a construction dispute. The fact that the arbitrators are often experts in the field that is the subject matter of the dispute enables them to sift the truly relevant facts and exclude consideration of those that merely clutter the record and are offered as a matter of course by the parties.

Because of their acknowledged expertise in the subject matter of the dispute, more than 99 percent of arbitrators' awards in construction arbitration have been affirmed by the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, although in some of them there were minor modifications.

Choice of venue

III. Choice of venue of the proceeding. During an international commercial arbitration seminar conducted in Cebu City under the auspices of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a participant, a lady business person, informed the participants of a case against her company, commenced in the United States, where she had already spent a couple of million pesos and the date of hearing was not even in sight. She mentioned this because she believed the expense was unnecessary and avoidable if only the contract she signed provided for arbitration as a mode of dispute resolution.

It is in international arbitration that this benefit is more easily recognized and acknowledged. In a commercial transaction between two or more business entities having their places of business in different states, litigation, if it is chosen as a mode of dispute resolution, can be commenced, as a general rule, only in the jurisdiction where either party has a place of business. Thus, in a commercial dispute arising between two parties, one having a place of business in Tokyo, Japan, and the other in Metro Manila, Philippines, the competent courts that can take jurisdiction over the dispute are those either in Tokyo or Metro Manila. Both parties would naturally prefer to have their dispute settled in the court of a neutral state. But this cannot be done because of the familiar rule of forum non conveniens, applying which the court of a third state will decline to take jurisdiction over the dispute. If they, however, submit their dispute to arbitration, the place of arbitration can be any place chosen by them, even in a third state.

Cost efficiency

IV. Arbitration is cost efficient. The obvious advantages of arbitration as a mode of dispute resolution are amply demonstrated by its cost efficiency. Since the period for hearing and decision is fairly short, legal costs are also considerably reduced. It is often pointed out that arbitrators have to be paid their fees. In contrast, judges are paid by the state. In that sense, it is said, there is an additional cost to the parties.

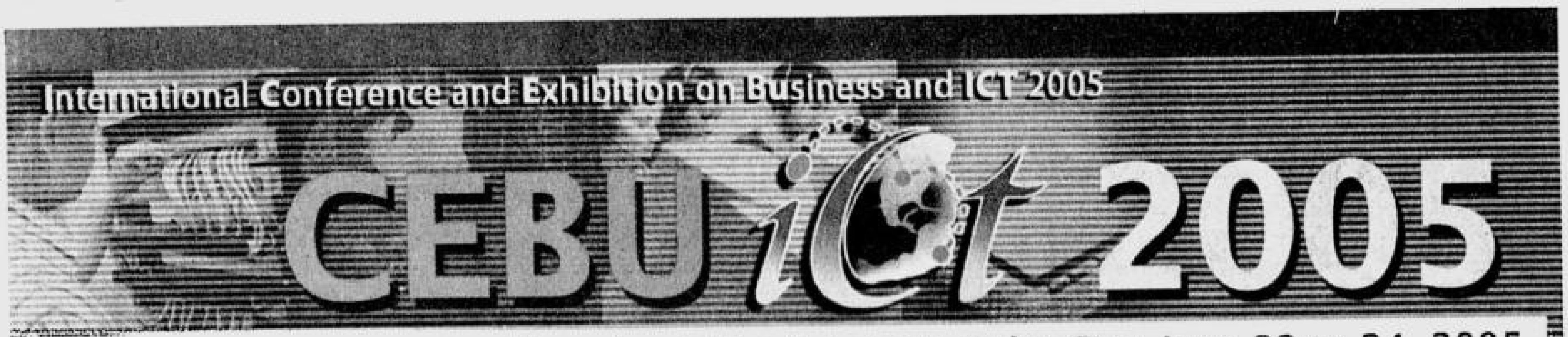
Arbitrators are professionals with different kinds and varying degrees of expertise. As professionals, they are entitled to a compensation that takes into account that expertise, their professional standing, the nature of the dispute, the issues raised, the amount involved and the time they have to devote themselves to hearing and deciding a case. It is often said that if one needs a quality product, one has to pay the price.

The cost of arbitration need not be exorbitant. Parties can choose a more convenient venue as a place of arbitration. The objection to the Philippines as the place of arbitration in earlier years was due to the Philippine substantive law on arbitration, Republic Act No. 876, which took effect in 1953. The law was thought to be antiquated and did not allow the use of current and standard arbitration procedures used in many countries of the world. The Philippines has adopted the Uncitral Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration with the passage of Republic Act No. 9285, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act of 2004. If a foreign venue is unavoidable because it may be insisted upon by a foreign party to a commercial transaction, the parties can decide on a neutral venue more convenient to a Philippine party. It does not have to be Paris, New York or Zurich. It could be Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia or Indonesia.

For domestic arbitration in particular, the parties can choose as arbitrators qualified individuals within a community where the parties have their place of business. The arbitrators need not be retired Justices of the Supreme Court. They do not even have to be lawyers. The Arbitration Law allows the appointment of any person as arbitrator if he is at least 18 years of age and is literate. This is so in order to give the parties the widest freedom of choice in appointing arbitrators. Thus, a party, a judicious choice of arbitrators and the place of arbitration can considerably minimize the cost of dispute resolution.

Arbitration is therefore more cost efficient than litigation. For example, hearing and resolving a case involving the issuance of bouncing—a very simple case—may last five years. The decision may not be forthcoming until after a few months. In arbitration, the hearing may last for one-half day. The award may be released in one week after hearing. Thus, the cost of legal representation is considerably reduced.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is Of Counsel of Parlade Hildawa Parlade and Eco Law Office and president emeritus of the Philippine Dispute Resolution Center Inc. Feedback at map@globenet.com.ph)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Prior to his appointment in MDC, he was the Deputy Director-General 1 (1991-1996) of the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (MIMOS) responsible for its corporate research program.

He is the former Vice-President of the Malaysian Invention and Design Society (MINDS). He is the current Chairman of the Malaysian Design Council. On 25 February, 2003, he was appointed to the Board of Directors of the newly-formed Malaysia Intellectual Property Corporation.

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With full support from the local government and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCCI), C.E.B.U. ICT 2005 will launch "CEBU" as a competitive global brand and will focus on information and communications technology (ICT) as a key component for swift economic expansion. Spearheading this event are: Cebu Provincial Governor Hon. Gwendolyn F. Garcia, Cebu City Mayor Hon. Tomas R. Osmeña, Cebu Chamber of Commerce & Industry President Mr. Robert L. Go, CBM Overall Chair Mr. Francis O. Monera and C.E.B.U. ICT 2005 Chair Mr. Bonifacio D. Belen.

C.E.B.U ICT 2005 Partial Provisional Agenda

This year's conference and exhibition carries the theme "Asia's Emerging Role as a Global Center for IT & ITES-Enabled Services." Plenary and breakout sessions on vital topics aim to promote Asia as a premiere global ICT center, strengthen regional cooperation and collaboration, as well as highlight each country and city's key competencies, in order to present the region as a synergy of competent to meet the demands of global business.

Event Sponsors

Event Highlights - Plenary Sessions

Global IT and ITES Trends and Strategic Foresight - *Gene Hall, CEO, Gartner*
Opportunities & Threats for Asia's Emerging IT and ITES Industry - *Kiran Karnik, President, NASSCOM*
Where Will You Be Tomorrow? A Roadmap for Innovation - *Matt Thompson, Director, Technology Outreach and Open Source Programs Office Sun Microsystems*
Development of a Robust Software Industry - *Regional Speaker from Microsoft*
Evolving an IT & ITES Industry Development Model - *Datuk Dr. Mohamed Arif Nun, CEO, Multimedia Development Corporation*
The Global Innovation Outlook - *Erik Joseph Tabuena, Country Leader, Business Consulting Services, IBM Philippines, Inc.*
Next Generation Networks and Their Impact on the IT and ITES Industry - *Tan Seow Nguan, Director for Network Planning, Singapore Telecom*
Best Practices for Securing an Enterprise Environment for SMEs and Big Business - *Neil Graham, Vice President, Mid-Market Applications, Oracle Corporation Asia-Pacific*
ICT in Basic Education: Developing Human Capital at the Foundational Level - *Luli Arroyo, Director for Strategic Development, FIT-ED*
Creating Quality e-Government Solutions - *Panelists from DCI, NCC and Fujitsu*
Role of Venture Financing in IT & ITES Industry Development - *Paco Sandejas, Managing Partner, Narra Venture Capital*

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Don't miss this opportunity! Complete the pre-registration form below and fax to C.E.B.U. ICT 2005 Secretariat Manila +632 757 3512 or Cebu +6332 415 8483. Full conference registration details are available at www.cebuict2005.com. For more information, you may also call call TeamAsia (Manila) at +632 7573500 ext. 228 or TeamAsia (Cebu) +6332 415 8481 to 82.

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Top CEOs kick off this year's CSR event

GOING beyond the traditional photo opportunity, leaders in Philippine business and heads of non-profit organizations gathered last Friday to recognize the central role the private sector plays in alleviating the plight of the poor.

More than pledging their continuing commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR), the CEOs acknowledged the need to integrate their CSR into their business operations to sustain their contributions to communities.

"The achievement of our corporate goals and the need to contribute to societal well-being are inescapably linked," said Roberto R. Calingo, president of the League of Corporate Foundations (LCF) and executive director of Mirant Philippines Foundation.

Friday's ceremony at the Filipinas Heritage Library in Makati City kicks off the biggest CSR event next month: the CSR Expo 2005 on July 4 to 6 at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

The LCF, a network of over 50 corporate foundations and corporations engaged in social development work in the country, has been commemorating Corporate Social Responsibility Week in the Philippines for the past six years. The CSR Week has grown into an expo beginning 2003, and this year's theme, "Beyond Giving," offers a fresh look at CSR as more than philanthropy.

"Through our companies' CSR initiatives, we can develop the capacity of the poor to join the marketplace, and eventually bring them to the mainstream of society as contributors and consumers in the marketplace," said Marilou G. Erni, chairperson of the three-day CSR Expo 2005 and executive director of Petron Foundation Inc.

The three-day CSR Expo 2005 in July boasts of a dynamic lineup of respected CSR practitioners and business leaders from here and abroad, including Louis Willem "Tex" Gunning, the president of Unilever Best Foods Asia, and Jude Mannion, founder and CEO of New Zealand's Robin Hood Foundation which has elevated CSR into a "must-have" for business.

Mirant Philippines is the strategic partner for the CSR Expo 2005, with the Ayala Group, Petron Corp., Shell companies in the Philippines, and Metrobank Foundation as major partners.

RP creativity . . .

From page B3-1

they plop down on the circular couch fitted with abaca.

By this time entranced with the novelty of it all, the visitors queue up for free massage upstairs.

Outside the coco sphere, Japanese guests seem to think that somehow, the 19th-century specimen of a pair of bakya—itself an example of those Spain exhibited in the early world expositions—could well be their native geta, save for its elaborate carvings and decoration.

The Philippine exhibit also includes some samples of *pandaka pygmea*, the world's smallest freshwater fish, displayed under a magnifying glass.

A few minutes walk away, a light spray jolts one walking under the hot Aichi sun—it is Nagoya City's Earth Tower. Listed in the Guiness Book of World Records as the largest kaleidoscope, water runs down from the top of the tower toward the line of patrons below.

Those who want to enjoy the kaleidoscope must wait an average of 70 minutes for the colorful show that only lasts for a few minutes.

Other highlights of the Aichi expo include the remains of Mammoth that was unearthed in the Siberian permafrost; the worlds largest theater screen at 2,005 inches; Toyota group's robot musical band; Hitachi Group's building that looks like a gorge, complete with a waterfall; and Central Japan Railway Co.'s maglev vehicle display.

As the high tech displays thrill the crowds, the Philippines' small yet monumental exhibit quietly shines in the land of the rising sun.

Meant to educate people on how human civilization progresses, the first modern world fair was held in London's Hyde Park and the last in Hanover, Germany, in 2000.

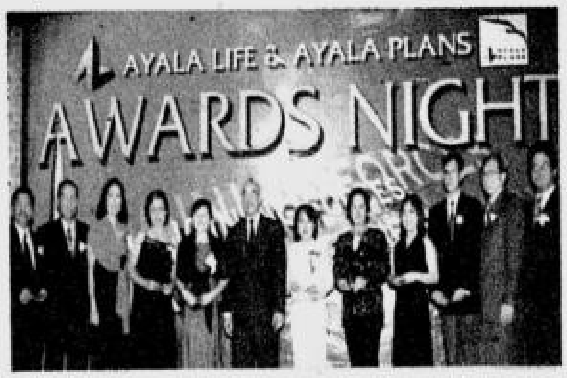
The 2005 Aichi expo, which lasts until Sept. 25, is the fourth to be held in Japan after the ones in Tsukuba Science City in 1985, Okinawa in 1975 and Osaka in 1970.

The next expos would be in Zaragoza, Spain, in 2008 and Shanghai, China, in 2010.

AYALA PLANS AWARDS TOP ACHIEVERS ON ITS 10TH YEAR

Ayala Plans, Inc. honored its top producers with a congratulatory dinner and awards ceremony held at the Intercontinental Hotel Makati last April 6, 2005 in yet another joyful recognition of the excellence of its workforce.

Honored were Ayala Plans President's Circle awardees Nenita Fernandez, Hanae Venus Bagabaldo, Kristine Marie Sabelino and Ivan Nemenzo; as well as Ayala Plans' Honor Roll Awardees Divina Claricia, Stella Pantua, Ma. Lourdes Evangelista, Nelia Nemenzo, Nelly Joy Garpa and Emerson Satorre.



Ayala Plans Honor Roll awardees share the stage with company executives (from left): Regional Manager Clara D. Caguiada, ALAI Business Director Lauro L. Abaño, AP Business Director Marilyn A. Mayoralgo, Divina Claricia, Stella Pantua, BPI-IG President Emilio S. De Quiros Jr., Ma. Lourdes Evangelista, AP Business Manager Nelia Nemenzo, Regional Manager Viviene L. Villena, Alvin Roldan, Sales Director Angelo M. Cabrera and Sales Director Jose A. Montino Jr.

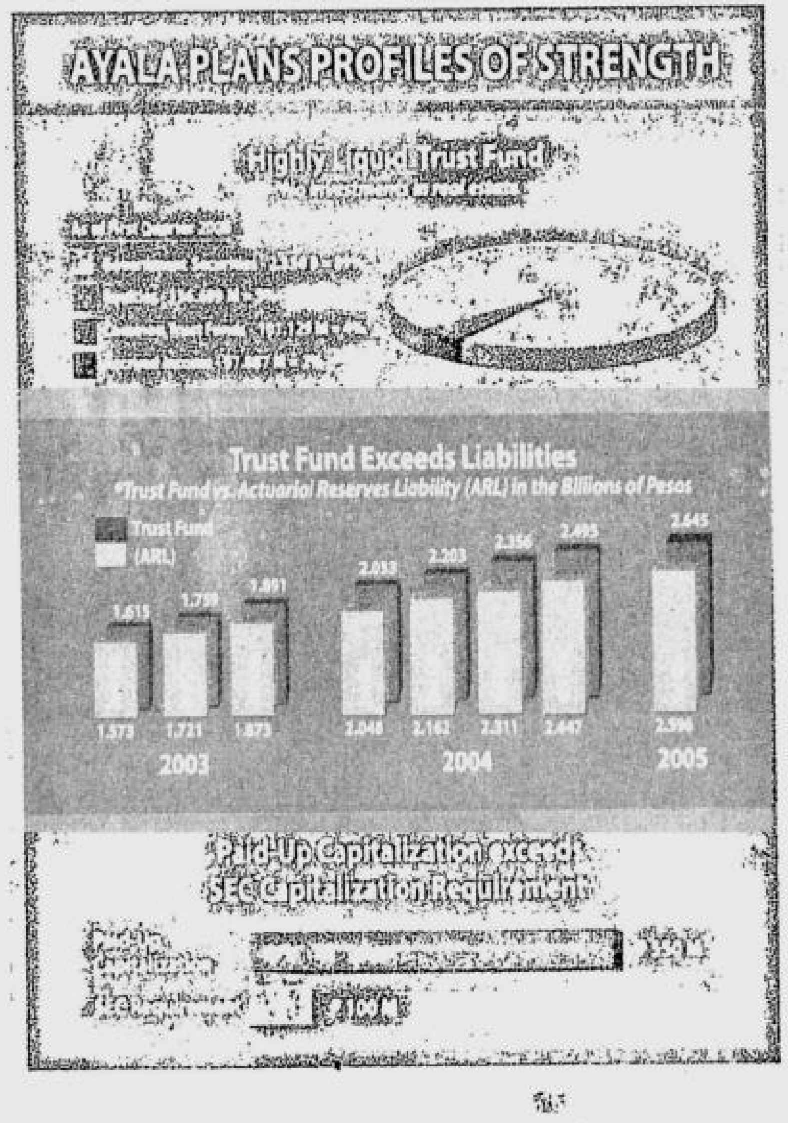
Decked out in formal attire, the awardees proudly trooped to the stage to receive their prizes and plaques. Festive music and applause echoed the collective sentiment of the group. "Everyone felt like celebrating," smiled Marilyn A. Mayoralgo, Business Director for Ayala Plans. "The effort has paid off really well. We have come a long way."

GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Now on its tenth year of operations, Ayala Plans continues to make big strides in the pre-need industry. Working in partnership with over 2,000 agents, it generated a net income of P36.4 million before full amortization of deferred commissions in 2004. And it shortly achieved "zero-deferred commission" status during the first quarter of 2005, way ahead of the deadline set by the Securities and Exchange Commission for pre-need companies.

The Company attributes its rapid growth to a competent sales force and a loyal pool of planholders, now 46,000 strong. Ayala Plans further solidified its commitment to its agents and plan holders in 2000, when it became the wholly-owned pre-need company of the Bank of the Philippine Islands, a multi-awarded institution and the most financially stable universal bank in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia.

Ayala Plans President's Circle Awardees were (from left) Nenita Fernandez, Hanae Venus Bagabaldo, Kristine Marie Sabelino and Ivan Nemenzo.



Ayala Plans President Emilio S. De Quiros Jr.: "BPI stands behind its companies."

Its asset base has grown to over P4.5 billion today, and paid-up capitalization has reached P550 million, or four and a half times higher than the SEC requirement of P100 million. Meanwhile, trust funds exceed Company liabilities by P50 million.

According to Emilio S. de Quiros Jr., Ayala Plans President, this proves that "BPI stands behind its companies. [It] infused capital to make sure that [Ayala Plans] will be sound. Anything that happens to its subsidiaries will impact the mother company so it made sure that we're on solid ground." For more reasons than one, Ayala Plans certainly had reason to celebrate its performance this year.

A ROCK AMIDST STORMY WATERS

Indeed, despite liquidity issues that have plagued a number of players in the pre-need industry, Ayala Plans has maintained a firm grip on the loyalty of its clients. "Knowing BPI's reputation, our agents and our clients know the kind of strength and stability we are offering," says Mayoralgo. "They know that we are highly capable of honoring our commitments for the years to come."

She adds, "Our planholders entered into a long-term commitment that requires their trust, and they feel safe. Although the industry is experiencing problems, they still feel good about their investments. Ayala Plans only sold fixed-value plans from the start, and with BPI now fully behind it, it stands on even firmer ground."

De Quiros maintains that pre-need is still one of the best investments a person can make. "The value of pre-need is that it forces people to save money. It's a savings plan with a goal, a way of making sure that money for the future is not used for the present and for sometimes, unnecessary purchases. Pre-need is a solid concept," he says. "The question people have to ask themselves is not whether or not it's wise to buy pre-need plans, but who to buy them from."

Ayala Plans Business Director Marilyn Mayoralgo: "Our clients know the strength and stability we are offering."

Synergy with the bank is already giving pre-need clients and agents numerous conveniences. Clients can access their pre-need account payments through BPI's facilities, namely Express Phone Banking (89-100), Internet Banking (www.bpiexpressonline.com), and Express Teller Machines (ATMs), nationwide. Agents can also collect commissions and remit premium collections through BPI's branches and ATMs.

A DRIVEN SALES FORCE

BPI President Aurelio R. Montinola III emphasized the synergy between Ayala Plans and the bank in his keynote speech.

Yet convenience is just one of the many reasons why Ayala Plans' agents continue to meet and even surpass Company expectations. Confident of BPI's financial stability and support, agents are exhibiting an increasing enthusiasm to sell.

"Our business partners achieve their goals because they feel motivated, and they feel motivated because they feel secure," says Mayoralgo. "They are assured that Ayala Plans will be able to fulfill all its obligations, and thus never put their personal credibility and integrity on the line. And as this year's awards night shows, this partnership is reaping the rewards."

Ayala Plans, Inc. celebrated its awards night together with Ayala Life, Assurance, Inc., BPI's wholly-owned insurance company.

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New firm with old faces to use tested formula

By Elizabeth Sanchez

XCELL Property Ventures is a new name with old faces in business that is set to build "The Icon" this year, its maiden high-rise project which will sit on Fort Bonifacio's last prime property that has a sweeping view of the Manila Golf and urban skyline.

Xcell is backed up by corporate bigwigs—Enrique Razon of port giant International Container Terminal Services Inc., Ramon Sy of International Exchange Bank, Landco Pacific president Alfred Xerez-Burgos, Gerardo Lanuza Jr. of Philippine Realty Holdings and veteran stockbroker Wilson Sy with its president and chief executive officer Rally Martinez at the helm.

The Icon also brings together the design of architects Recio+Casas and contemporary interiors by C/S Design Consultants.

Martinez says in an interview that "the Icon" is a play of both old and new meanings.

"The term icon is used to represent landmarks for men and women of distinction, so it has always been an old name. But it is also a new name, used in computer lingo. It is new in a sense because it is modern architecture but founded on old, time-tested techniques, in terms of number one, location, location, location. This is what real estate is all about, that's why we say we are on the primest lot on Fort Bonifacio. That is an old time-tested tradition," Martinez says.

He also says the Icon stands for "Inside Comfort, Outside Nature", marrying both comfort from the interior and its view of nature outside your unit which addresses complaints about living inside a condominium or the feeling of being confined within its four walls.

RALLY Martinez, president of Xcell Property; Meloy Casas, architect; Anna Sy, interior designer, and Guia Casas

The Icon will consist of two towers with 34 storys each, and sits on 4,300 square meters of property. Project cost is estimated at P1.3 billion.

The Icon currently has a showroom at the lobby of the West Tower in Tektite, Ortigas City.

"When I did the internal they needed for the mock-up, I wanted the space to feel modern but not too cold, not too minimalist, and I think the market, or I imagine the market for a building like this to be for people that are younger or for younger families ," Anna Maria Sy, managing director of C/S Design Consultancy said.

Martinez says he considered the Icon to be a balance between aesthetics and functionality.

"We never say we are ultra modern that we become dysfunctional. We are not too functional that we are considered boring," he says.

Since it launched its model unit last April, Martinez claims the Icon has sold 40 percent of its 330 units.

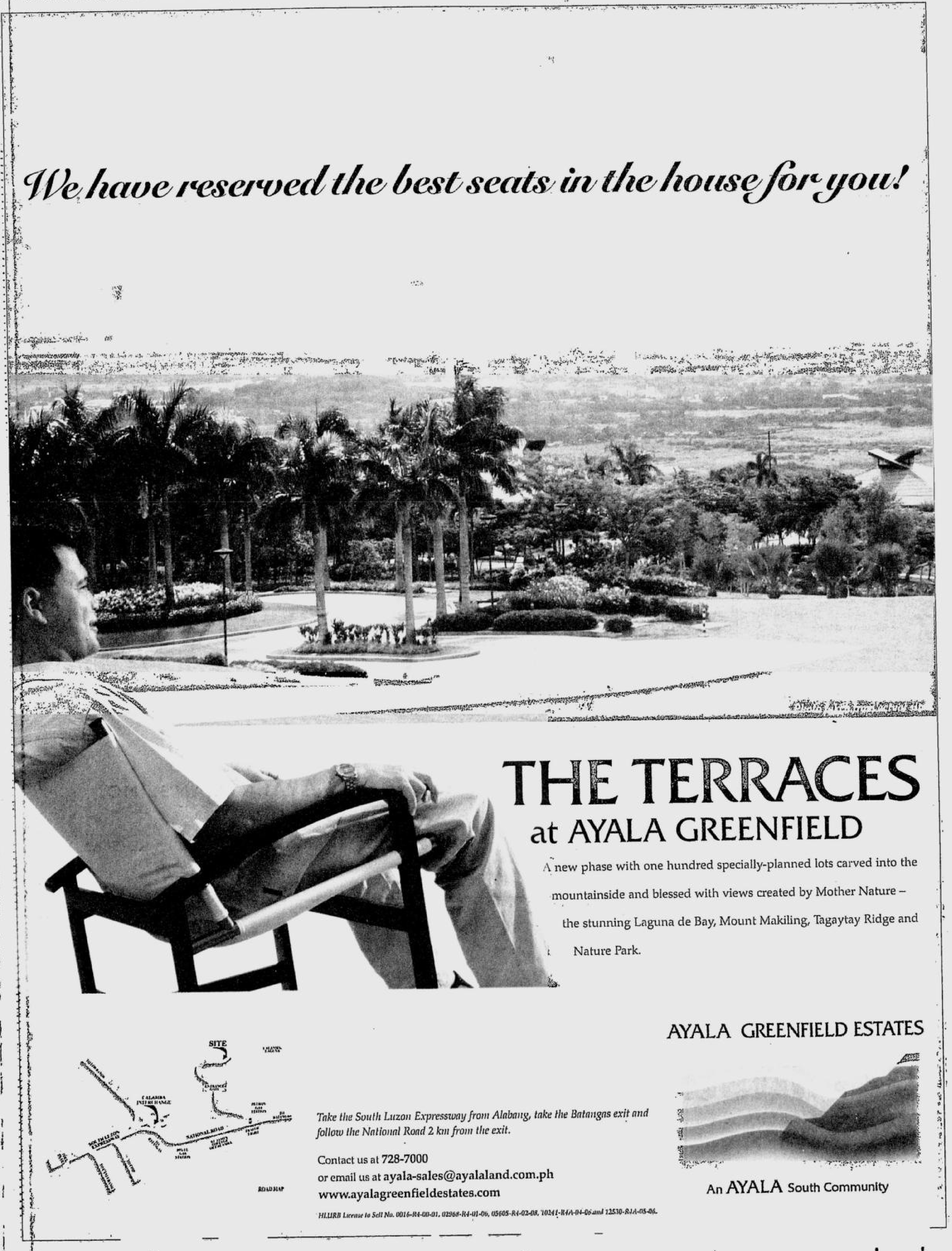
A studio unit at Tower One, with an area of 36 square meters would cost some P3 million at P85,000 per square meter. A one-bedroom unit has an area of 61 square meters while a two-bedroom unit is 65 square meters.

Xcell offers its customers a flexible payment scheme. The unit is paid over a three-year period, with 60 percent on the third year and 40 percent when the unit is available. It charges no interest.

With construction starting late this year, the project is expected to be completed by 2008.

Martinez has high hopes for the property sector, saying it is well on its way to recovery.

"There will be parity between supply and demand. At least there will be enough demand to cover the current supply specially with the increasing interest from the Fil-Am market," he says.



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MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◎ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◎ WEDNESDAY **2BU** ◎ THURSDAY **FOOD** ◎ FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Korea

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

DIFFERENT architects designed the three museum buildings of the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul—Mario Botta from Switzerland, Jean Nouvel from France and Rem Koolhaas from the Netherlands.

The diverging architecture visually harmonizes with each other and also with its backdrop, a peaceful wooded setting on a steep slope in Hannam-Dong, a quiet low-density residential district in the hills close to the Seoul city center.

Samsung Museum of Art is anchored on a 27,000-sq-m master plan completed by Kolhaas in 1997, who also designed the Child Education and Culture Center building through which one enters the museum.

Kolhaas' entrance ramp to Leeum, located between the outdoor deck and the child center, is a procession leading from street to underground lobby.

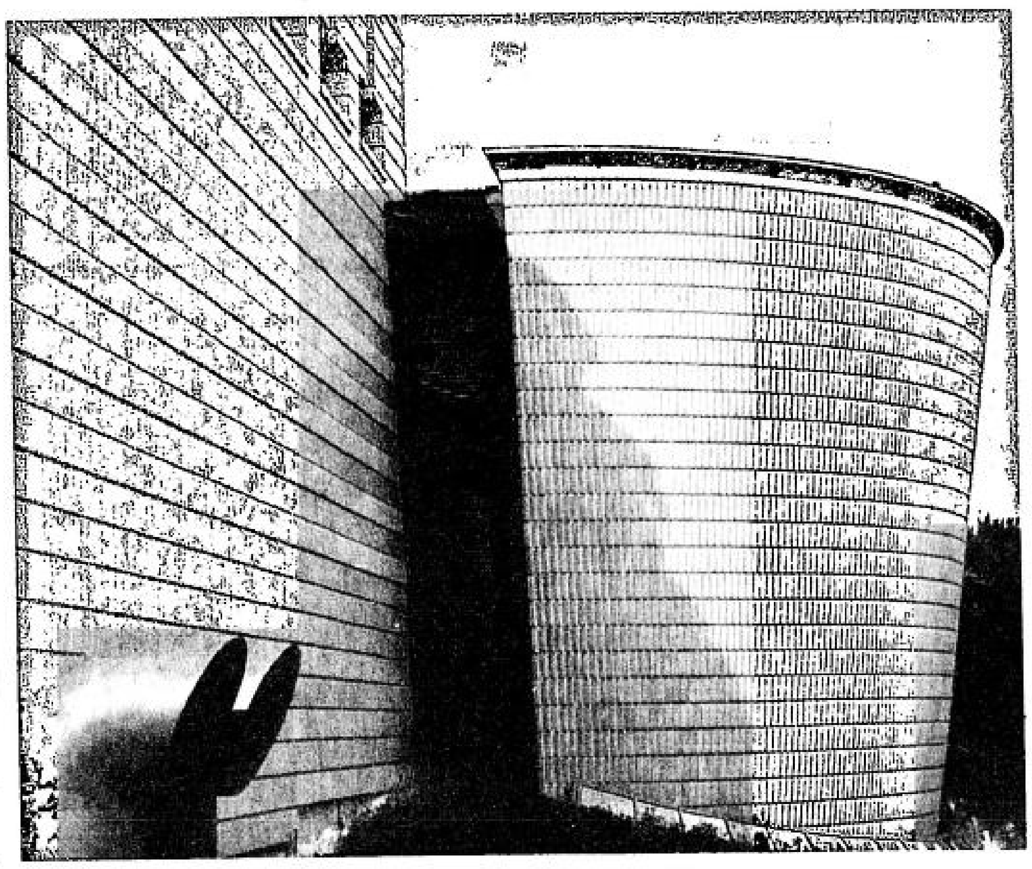
Visitors experience a visual juxtaposition beginning with nature, followed by wood, concrete, glass and steel as the ramp drops below grade until reaching an underground central mixing chamber—lobby, information area, gift shop and restaurant—where all three buildings converge and from where all museums are entered.

Textured bricks cover the simple geometric forms and the reverse conical shape of Museum 1, the Botta building housing the permanent collection of Korean art. Trees on the roof of the building suggest fluttering flags atop the fortress-like detailing of the façade. The skylit reverse cone ramp connects all four floors of the building with the underground lobby.

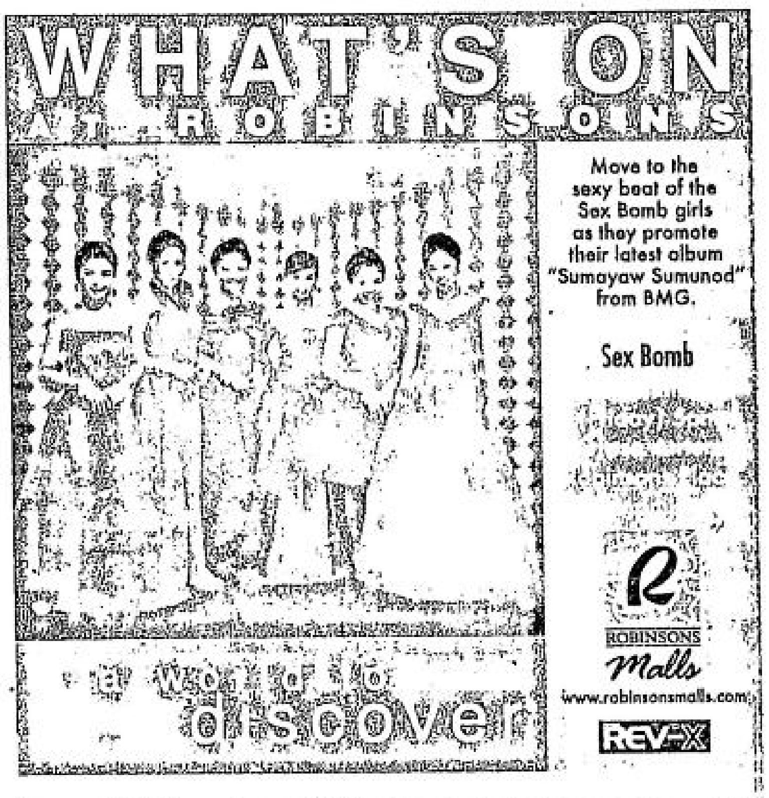
The regular tour begins at Museum 1 where exhibits of traditional Korean art date from as early as the fourth century, an important collection including many officially designated as national treasures.

Viewing starts from the top floor. Reminiscent of Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York City, a skylit circular ramp spirals from the fourth floor toward lobby. Its circulation pattern is confusing as it connects floors with exhibits of exquisite Korean *celadon*, *paekja* and *punchongsagi* white porcelain, Omunho porcelain depicting large fishes swimming among lotus flowers. Traditional Korean

THE LEEUM/ C2



TEXTURED brick accentuates the simple geometric mass of Museum 1 by Swiss architect Mario Botta.



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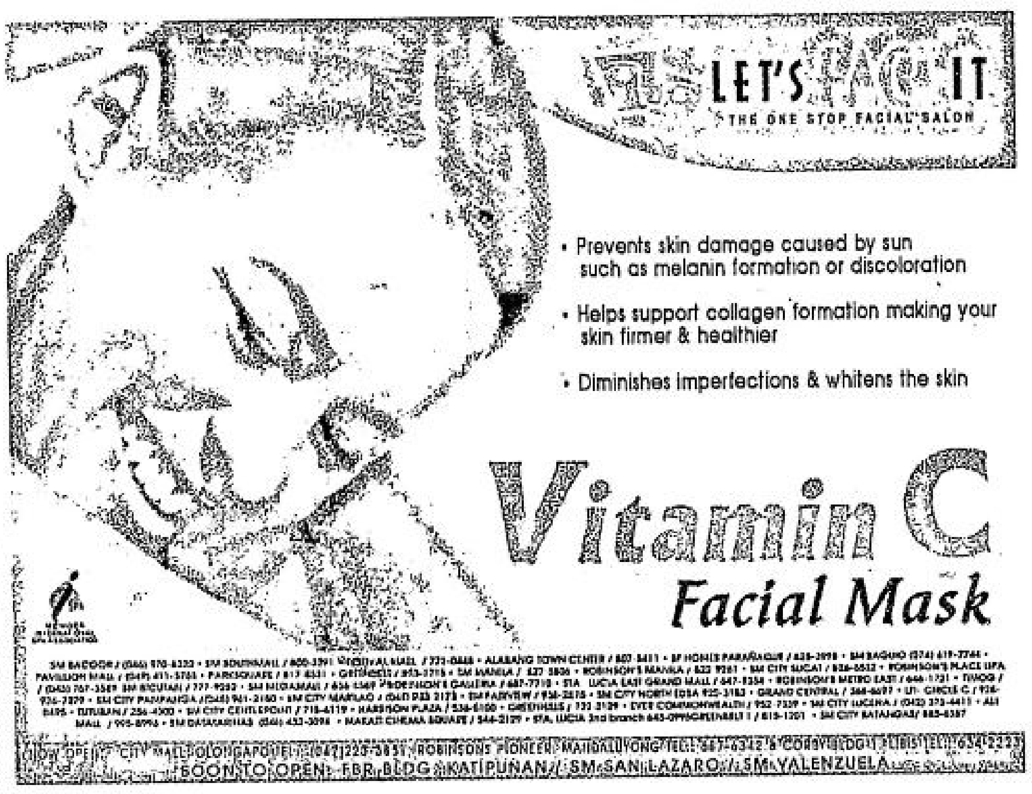

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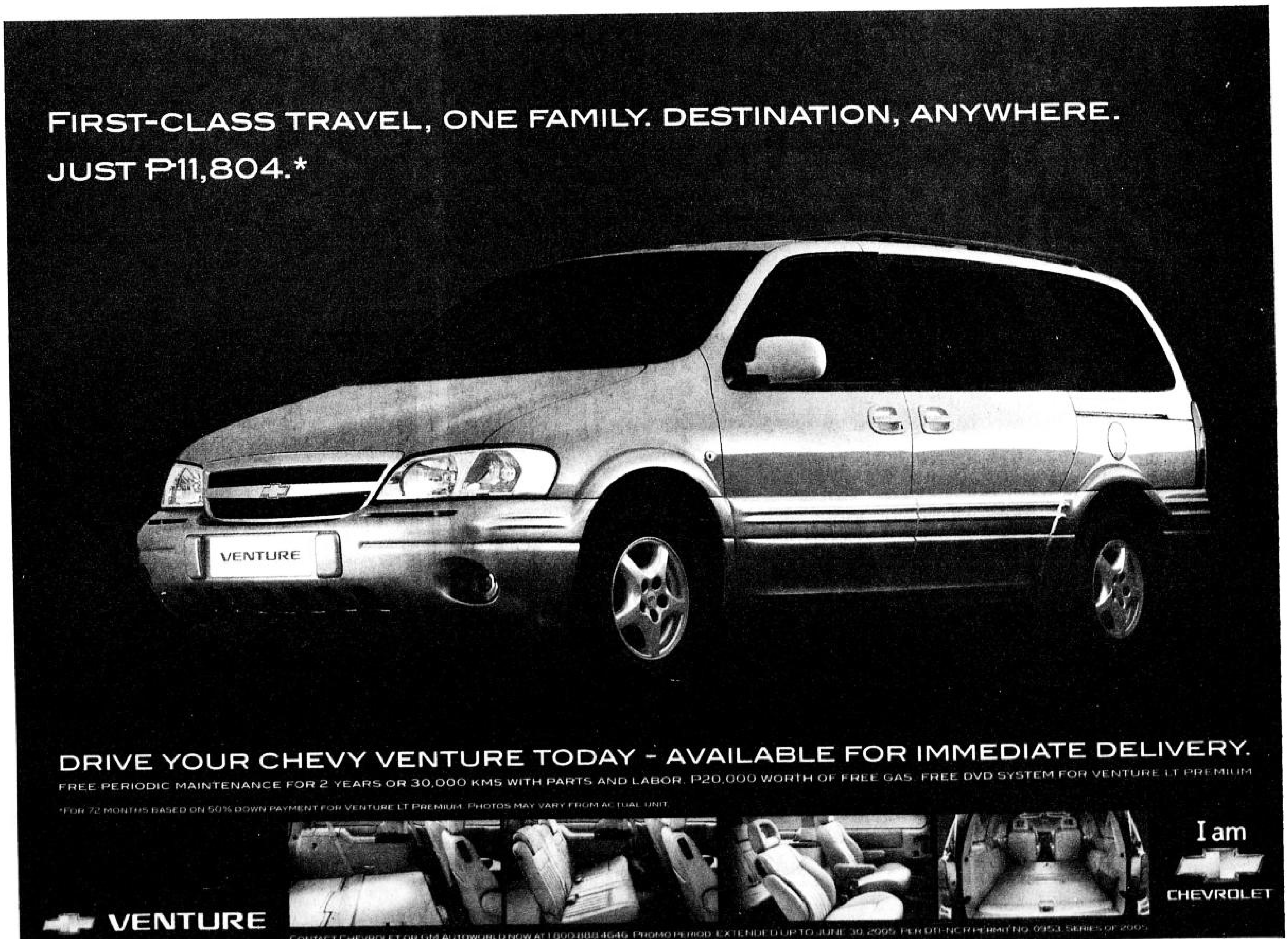

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Marikina artists' sojourn with nature

By Alane Ty
Contributor

CRESTA Grande is a slice of solitude and natural splendor in the coastal town of Ternate. Here in this nature's haven, a group of artists who call themselves Kulay Marikina have found a serendipitous location for one of their on-the-spot painting sessions.

Watercolor. Pastel. Acrylic. Pen and ink. Each one chooses a favorite medium to interpret and express what he or she sees with the creative eye. As for subjects to paint, the artists are surely spoiled for choice. To the west lies the sea and the coast with its numerous coves and promontories. To the east are magnificent views of rolling hills and verdant mountains. All around, the preserved forest environment with its many species of birds, flora and fauna provide many opportunities for inspired creation.

This is the group's second visit to Cresta Grande. The hilltop development, with its panoramic views of Cala Paniman and Cala Caysubic beaches, sprawls over a 21-hectare area within the Puerto Azul Complex. Its secluded beaches, championship golf course and country club facilities can be enjoyed by those who invest in Cresta Grande's idyllic seaside subdivision lots.

Colorful

Sojourns like this make life more colorful for the artists of Kulay Marikina. It presents a unique opportunity for them to reinforce their common bonds of friendship and creativity. Since they all hail from Marikina, the artists have found a common goal to promote their home city as an artists' village.

Kulay Marikina president Lydia Velasco hopes the group can help bring about a cultural renaissance in the city and boost cultural awareness among Mariqueños: *"Nais naming itaas ang antas ng kultura sa* Marikina, *at pagyamanin ito sa pamamagitan ng* art."

Talented roster

The idea for a united artists' group in Marikina was spearheaded by Mariqueño artist Dr. Jaime Capco. Today, the 30-strong group of Kulay Marikina takes pride in its talented roster of members: from renowned veterans like Lydia Velasco, Remy Boquiren and Cris Cruz, to many up-and-coming painters who aspire to make their mark in the visual arts firmament.

As Velasco puts it, *"Ang mga angking talento ng mga taga*-Marikina *ay isang kayamanan. Ito ay kayamanang 'di pa nabubungkal."*

To mine this wealth of untapped talent, the group began conducting art workshops this summer at the Marikina Hotel, a home base where the group gathers every Friday afternoon for painting sessions and meetings.

As for invitations to locations like Cresta Grande, the artists are only too thankful for the support offered, and for the opportunity to hone their craft in such interesting surroundings.

In the words of Kulay Marikina artist Remy Boquiren: "Being residents of Marikina, we are used to places that are green and beautiful, that's why places such as this truly suit our sensibilities."

A writer once called Cresta Grande "a new haven for artists." As the Kulay Marikina group packed up their art materials after another fruitful session, someone remarked, "An artists' haven indeed! We could get used to this."

"Women on Canvas" artists include Honey Banal, Remy Boquiren, Monn Cañeza, Chie Cruz, Cris Cruz, Ambie Flores, Isagani Fuentes, Luis Gabriel, Rodgie Gapayao, Renato Gojar, Jose Ibay, Ben Infante, George Ng, Cherry Pasicolan, Ernie Patricio, Andy Pernia, Noel Rile, Roland Santos, Bing Siochi, Trio Tamayo, Sheila Tiangco, Elmer Torio, Andy Urag, Tam Urao, Lydia Velasco and Liza Villaseñor.

The exhibit runs until June 30 at the Marikina Hotel, Tangerine St. and. Pio del Pilar St., Concepcion II, Marikina.

CRIS Cruz, Ben Infante, Cid Reyes, Lydia Velasco, Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando, Remy Boquerin, Didi Domingo, Manny Gaite, Al Ferer

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Rachy Cuna in Beijing; Acuña in Bacolod, Manila

VISUAL ARTS

TO MARK the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China, the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, Association of the Philippines-China Understanding (APCU) and Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries are holding a show of the acclaimed works by Filipino artist Rachy Cuna at The Gallery, 1 Tai Chang St., Beijing. The show is titled "Journeast: Passage to Beijing."

Cuna, floral architect, artist and art patron, design icon and philanthropist, has long been enamored of the Orient. His forays into various forms of art, from painting to jewelry design, from food styling to interior decoration, from floral design to liturgical art, has always been distinctly Asian. Cuna's abstract paintings—"Yin and Yang," "Spring Dance" and "Temples in the Moonlight"—are complemented by a new collection of jewelry made of mother-of-pearl dubbed "Blooms of the Sea." His limited-edition jewelry series, "Palay" and "Capiz Windows," are also on exhibit. Also on show are his floral designs, featuring Chinese flowers in indigenous containers from the Philippines. According to APCU president Josie Joya Baldovino, Cuna's works appeal to the aesthetic standards of the Chinese, paying respect to their sensibilities and their predilection for colors and symbolism that attract peace, wisdom and prosperity.

BACOLOD City's genteel countryside had a touch of shimmering gloss in abstract expressionist Ivan Acuña's "Metalscapes," a series of massive and small paintings at the Artes Figuras Gallery of Bacolod. Acuña's works have adorned One McKinley Place, Philippine Stock Exchange's Tektite Towers, Rockwell's Manansala Tower, BMW and Porsche showrooms, Azzuro and Wasabi restaurants, and Hyatt Hotel and Casino. Artes Figuras is at Piazza Sorrento, 13th Lacson St., Bacolod City. Call (034) 4334051 or 0917-8115399. In Manila, the series is on exhibit at the Metro Gallery at 455 P. Guevarra St., San Juan, Metro Manila; beside Café Isabel. Call 7256751.

RACHY Cuna

The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Korea

From page C1

paintings, calligraphy and Buddhist Art, including rare works as those of Kim Hong-do (b.1745) and Chong Son (1676-1759).

Contemporary and Korean modern art of the 20th century are in Museum 2 by Nouvel.

Unlike the completely inward-looking Museum 1 by Botta, the upper structure of Museum 2 by French architect Jean Nouvel looks outward toward the surrounding view. Stainless steel "exhibition boxes" punctuate glass walls that rise out of a forest of trees.

Museum 2 contrasts semi-enclosed exhibition boxes along the gallery perimeter with glass walls that provide either expansive city views or intimate mountainside views that show where the slope was cut to allow building construction. Steel cages filled with smaller pieces of cut mountain bedrock now used as retaining walls to control erosion are the backdrop of the landscaping.

The collection of modern Korean works exhibited in Museum 2 reflects the impact of Western styles on Korean art after their introduction to the country in 1910. Works by Lee Joong-sup, Byun Kwan-sik and other important Korean artists are represented.

The Museum 2 collection tells the story of the development of Korean art and cultural heritage from its traditional beginnings shown in Museum 1 to the contemporary work.

In contrast to Korean modern art, major works by Western artists include Andy Warhol, Mark Rothko, Bacon, Giacometti and others.

The Leeum experience is totally and memorably interactive. PDA (personal digital assistance) equipment offers state-of-the-art guided tours in Museums 1 and 2. The equipment, no larger than an ordinary mobile phone, is equipped with touch screens and an earphone provides voice assistance.

English or Korean interpretation is self-activated when one approaches a black dot on the floor fronting each exhibit. Icons on the PDA's individual touch screen lead to additional information if needed.

The Samsung Child Education and Culture Center by Kolhaas is a long glass building along the street, connecting Museums 1 and 2 and providing the main entrance to Leeum.

In the Child Education and Culture Center, ramps and escalators connect a series of open and enclosed exhibition areas on different levels. The openness of the interior space and the changing quality of light gives the impression of floating in space before arriving at a vast exterior deck in front of the structure with magnificent views of Seoul.

This section of the museum has traditional and contemporary art chosen to awaken children's potential in seeing and sensing art.

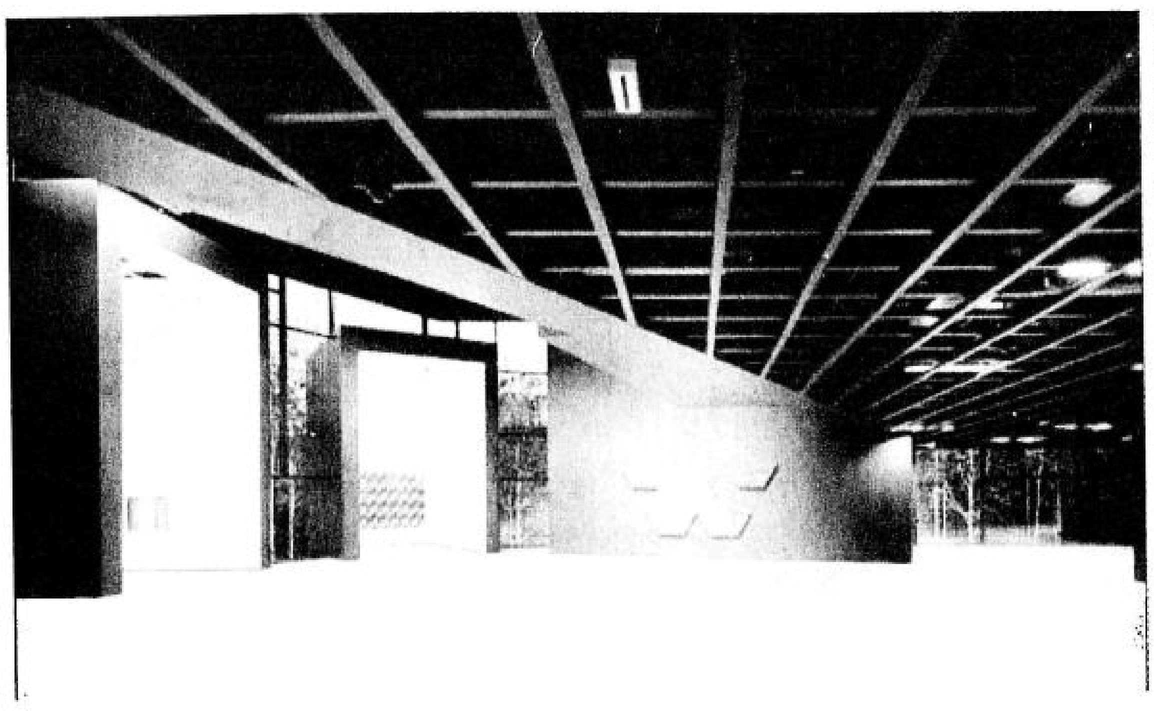
"Hyowon," a large traditional painting depicting a valley, is fitted out with speakers providing the sound of streaming water for a few seconds after one presses a button, a memorable experience for children and adults, since perception of the painting changes before and after hearing the sound.

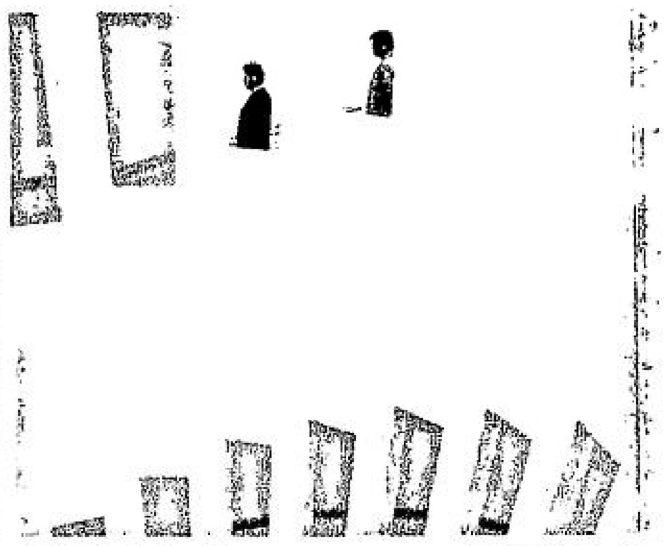
The museum has a dynamic conservation department that treats and conserves cultural properties, and sponsors educational and training programs. The Museum Archives holds rare books, archival material and exhibition catalogues. The Leeum Information Service provides in-depth information, description, and when available, reference drawings and photographs of the museum's exhibition, collections or its architecture.

The architecture, collection and up-to-the-minute technology of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art testimony to the Samsung corporate credo of excellence that supports cultural and artistic activities. Also part of the Samsung Cultural Foundation are the Ho-Am Art Museum, Rodin Art Gallery and Samsung Children's Museum.

Leeum is at 747-18 Hannam-Dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, Korea 140-983. A two-week prior notice for groups up to four persons at a time is required. Admission fee does not include rental for the PDA digital guide. Call 82-2014-6900 or visit www.leeum.org

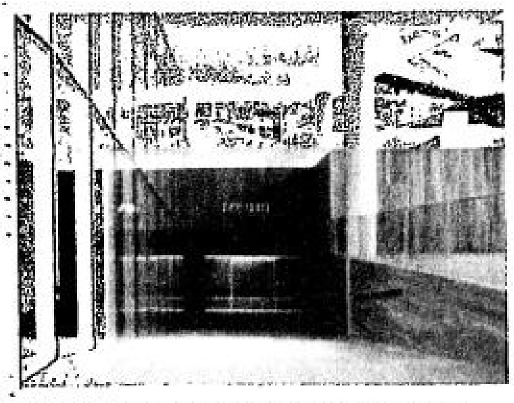
E-mail the author at afvillalon@hotmail.com



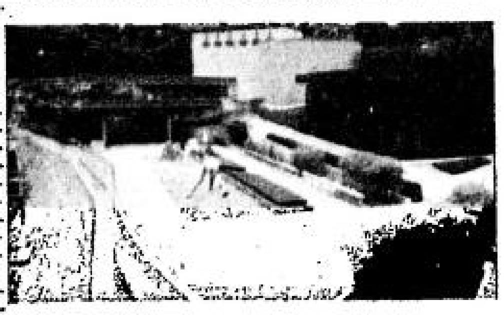


IN THE galleries of Leeum Museum 2, French architect Jean Nouvel contrasts enclosed viewing alcoves with landscaping.

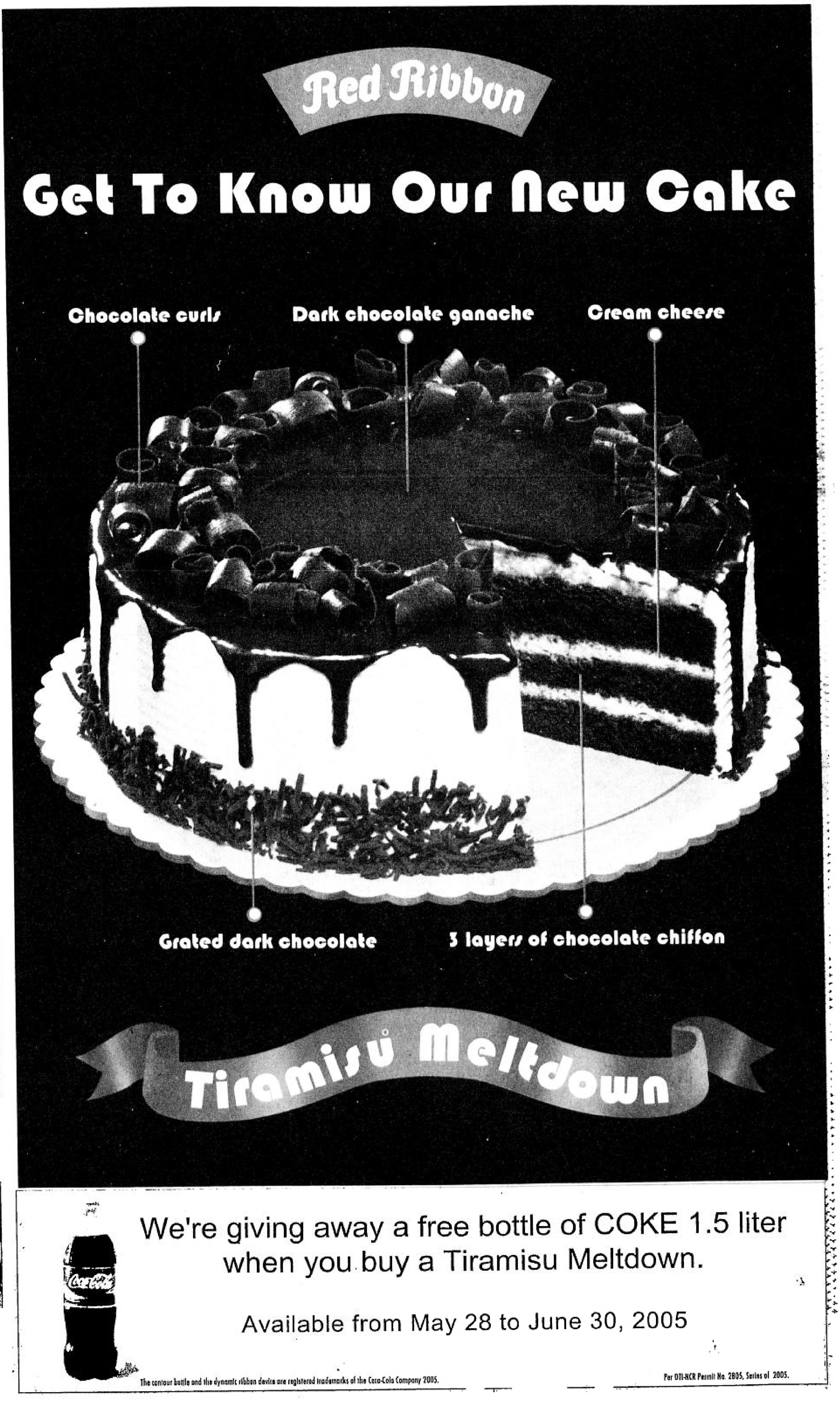
BOTTA'S skylit conical stair spirals down four floors of Museum 1.



THE ENTRANCE ramp to Leeum by Rem Kolhaas is a procession leading from the street to the central underground lobby that takes the visitor through a juxtaposition of nature with wood, concrete, glass and steel.



AN ACTIVE architectural dialogue comes together around the deck of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art with the Child Education and Culture Center by Kolhaas to the left, the brick Museum 1 by Botta at the center, and Museum 2 by Nouvel.



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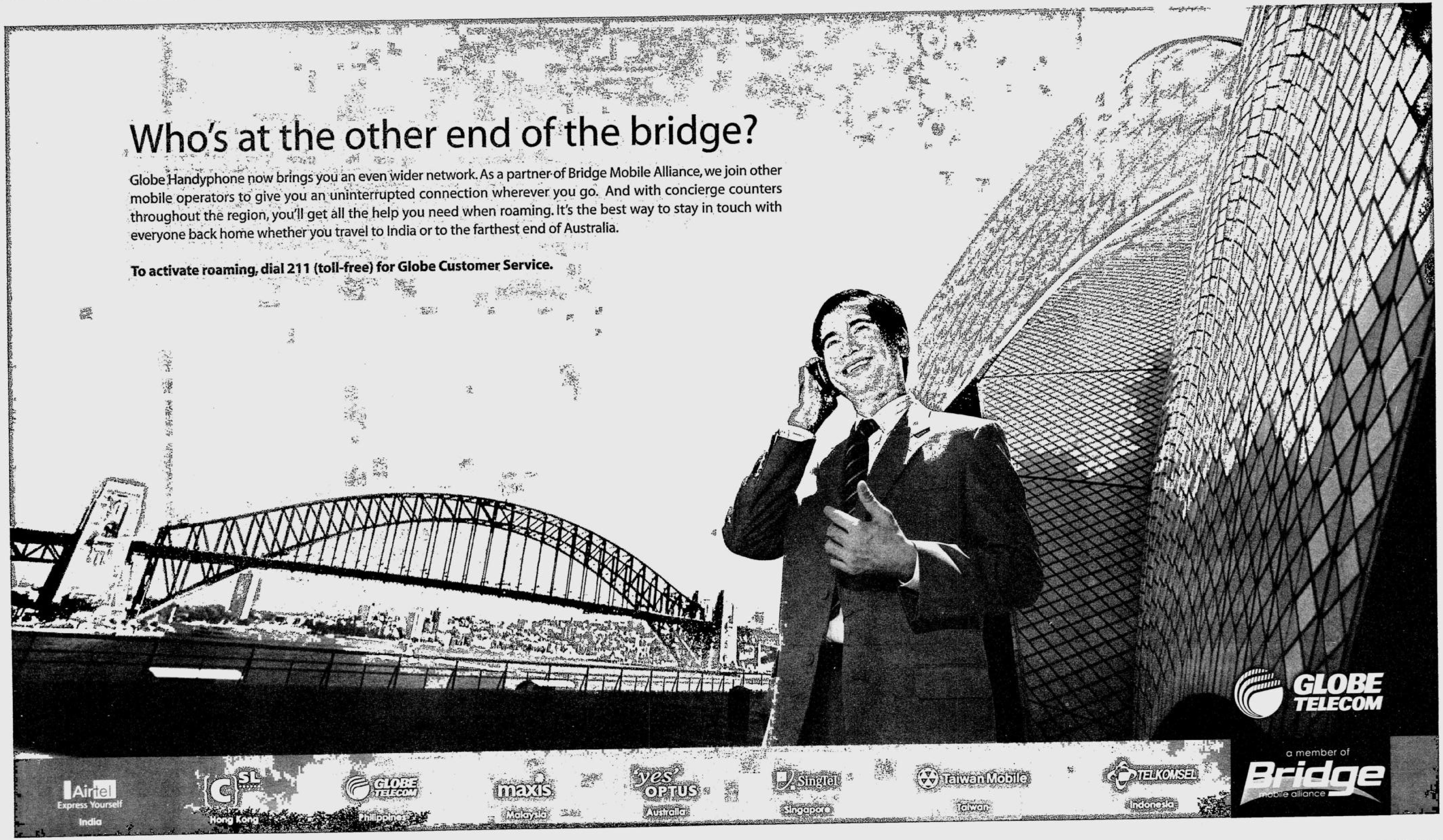
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2805, Series of 2005.



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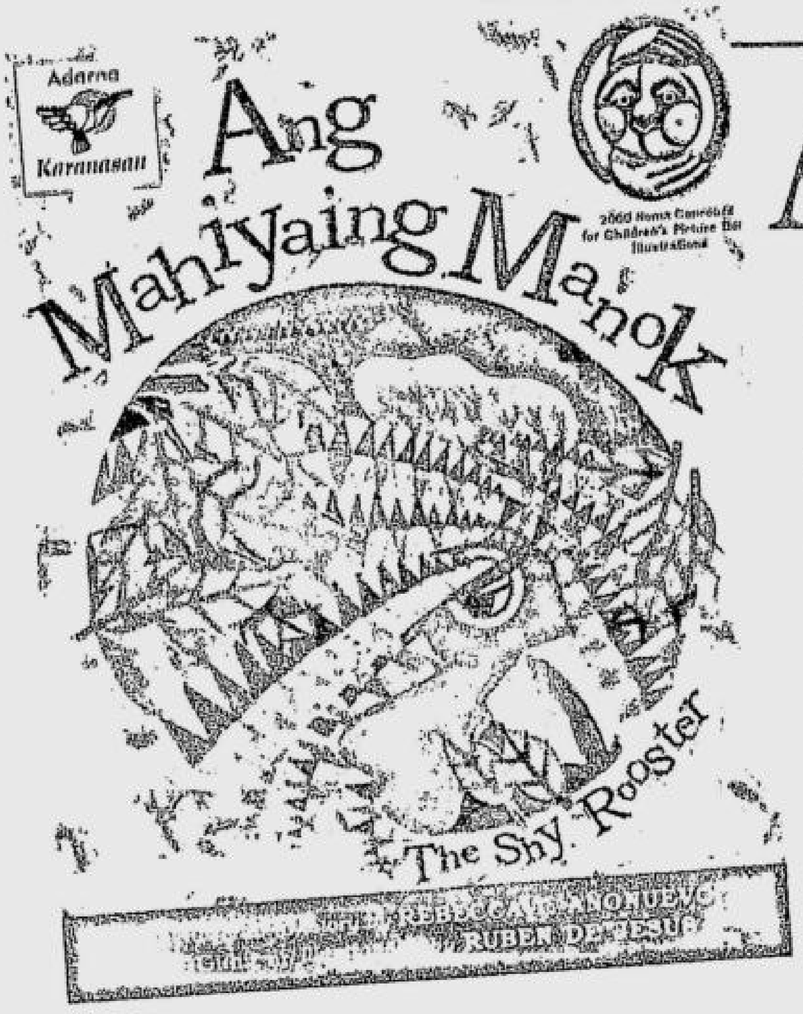


A feast of children's books

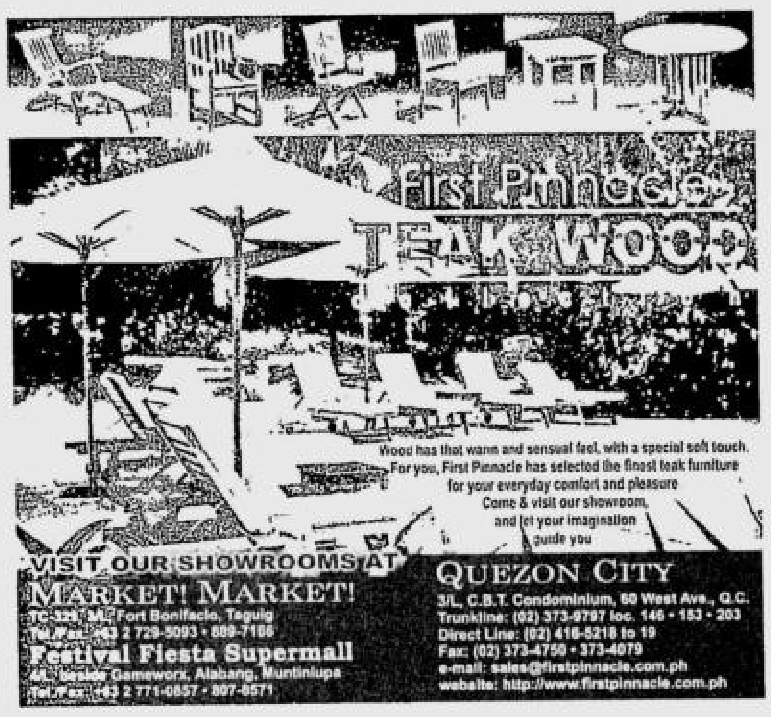
By Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz
Contributor

ADARNA House marks its 25th year in children's book publishing this year. No matter how one looks at it, against the all-too-familiar scenario in publishing in which businesses peak or enjoy modest success, then decline with the vagaries of commerce, and eventually fold up, that is no mean record.

Highlight of the celebration was the recognition of the authors and illustrators of the Top 25 best-sellers of over 200 books published by Adarna House since 1980.

The list is valuable to those interested in knowing what appeals to Filipino children. Parents may also consider it a suggested reading list for their kids. Every respectable school library

A FEAST/ D3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guide you
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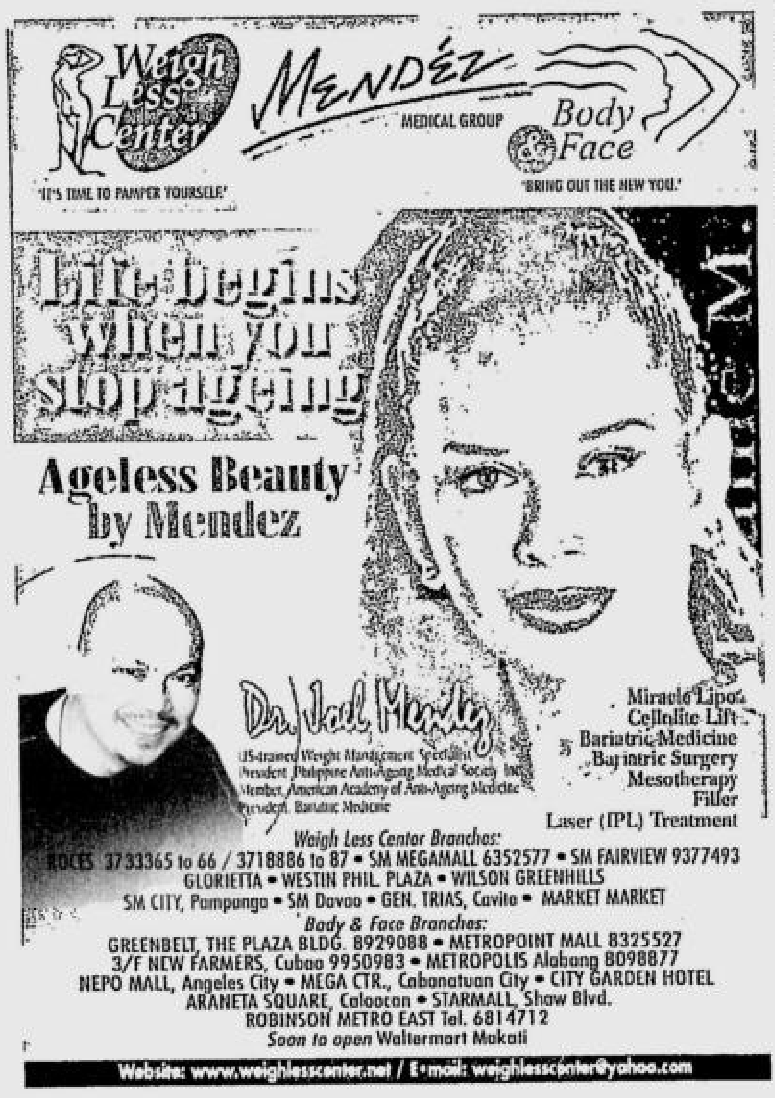
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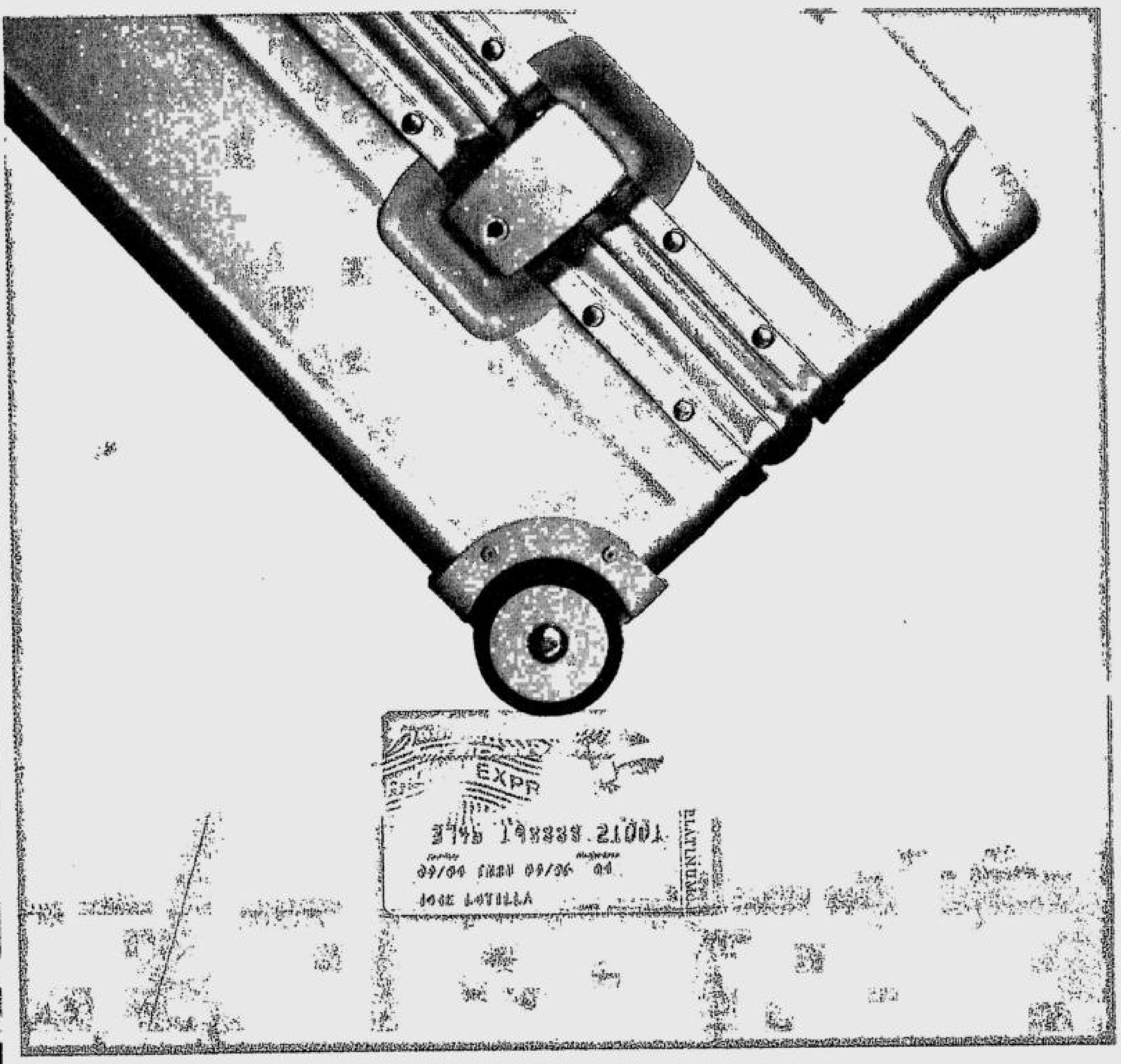
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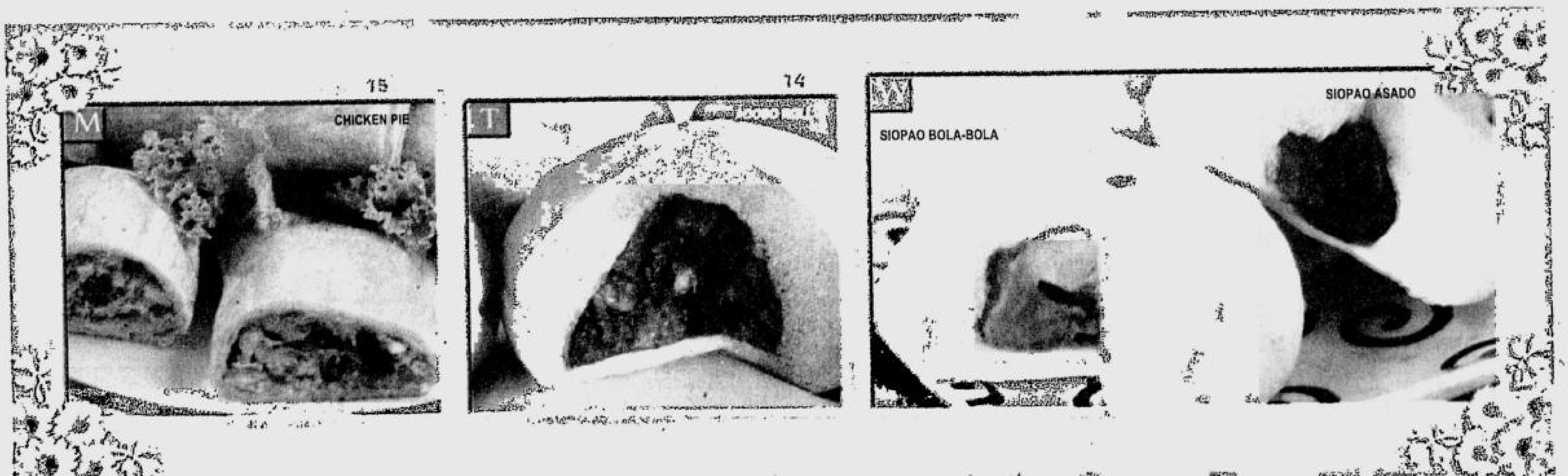
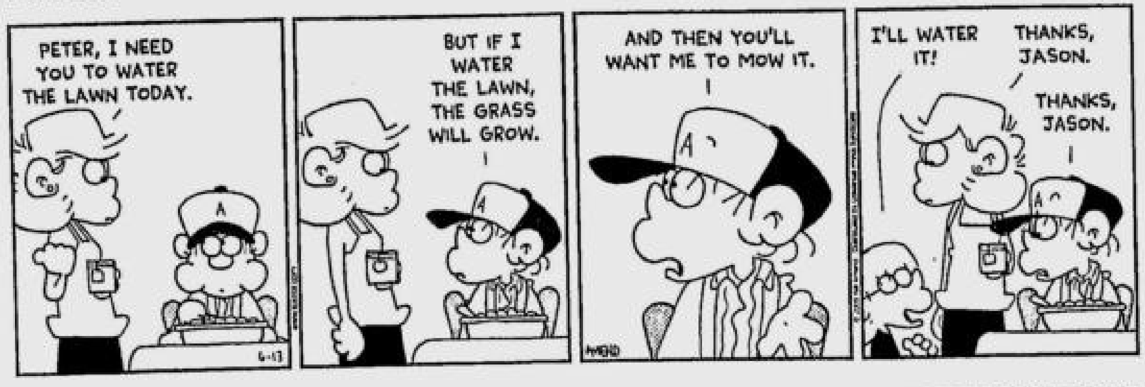


FILL DADDY'S HEART (and his tummy) WITH LOVE!
Celebrate when Dad's special day comes by giving him these three delicious meat-filled goodies from Goldilocks.
Para "busog" siya sa pagmamahal!
Goldilocks
How Thoughtful. How Pinoy.

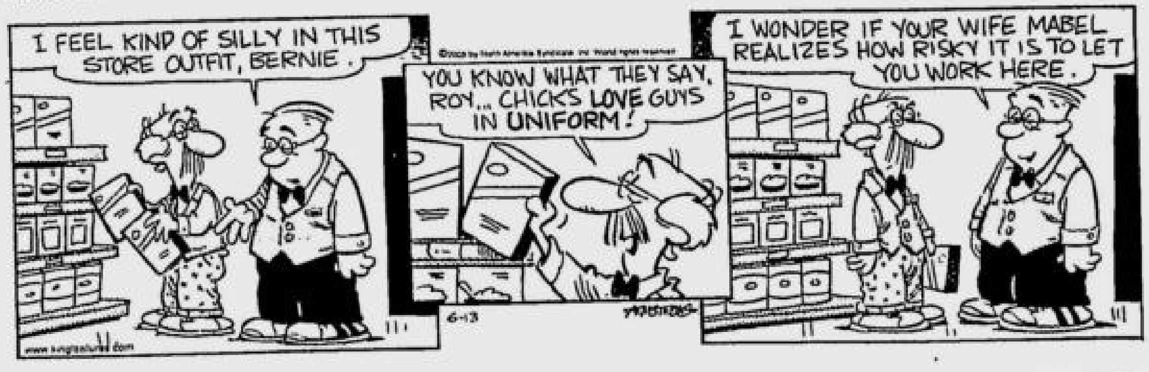
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


PETER, I NEED YOU TO WATER THE LAWN TODAY.
BUT IF I WATER THE LAWN, THE GRASS WILL GROW.
AND THEN YOU'LL WANT ME TO MOW IT.
I'LL WATER IT!
THANKS, JASON.
THANKS, JASON.
6-13

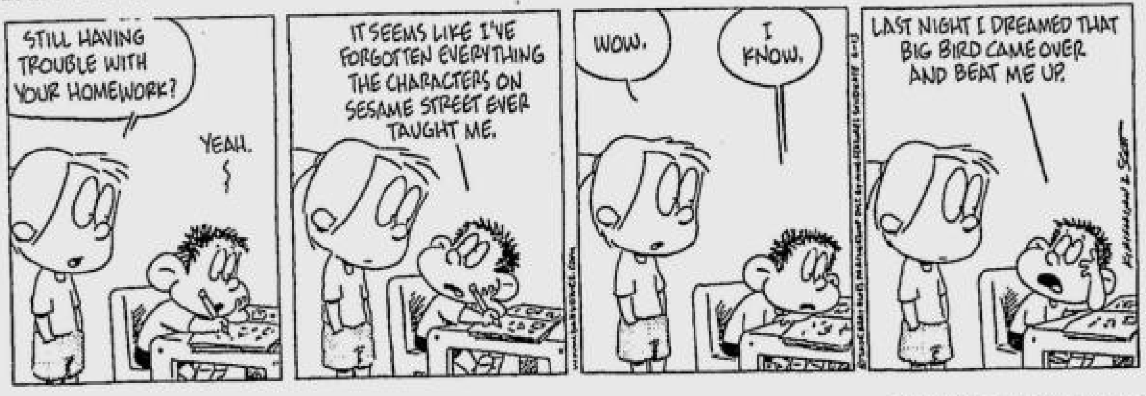
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I FEEL KIND OF SILLY IN THIS STORE OUTFIT, BERNIE.
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, ROY... CHICKS LOVE GUYS IN UNIFORM!
I WONDER IF YOUR WIFE MABEL REALIZES HOW RISKY IT IS TO LET YOU WORK HERE.
6-13
www.kingfeatures.com

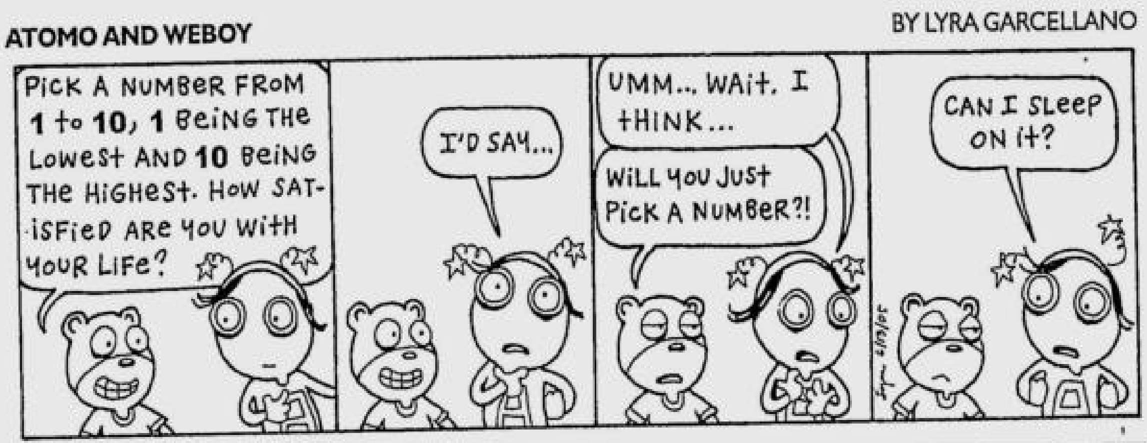
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH YOUR HOMEWORK?
YEAH.
IT SEEMS LIKE I'VE FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING THE CHARACTERS ON SESAME STREET EVER TAUGHT ME.
WOW.
I KNOW.
LAST NIGHT I DREAMED THAT BIG BIRD CAME OVER AND BEAT ME UP.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


PICK A NUMBER FROM 1 to 10, 1 BEING THE LOWEST AND 10 BEING THE HIGHEST. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR LIFE?
I'D SAY...
UMM... WAIT. I THINK...
WILL YOU JUST PICK A NUMBER?!
CAN I SLEEP ON IT?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You need a lot of freedom. You're active and adventurous. You're also gutsy and ambitious. You have strong opinions, and you're a shrewd observer of everything going on around you. You can be blunt and direct, but you're a natural leader. The year ahead could be one of the best years of your life! Expect a miracle. Birthdate of: Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, actresses; Dorothy Sayers, writer; Malcolm McDowell, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Don't play the part of the heavy today. You're convinced you're right about something, and you're going to let everybody else know it. This is not cool. Mellow out.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel compulsive about buying something today. You're obsessed. This means you're probably going to part with your cash. (I hope you know what you're doing.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A strong difference of opinion might occur today between you and someone close to you. Don't add fuel to the flame. Just accept what happened.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have a lot of energy to fix something at work now. (You see areas that need reform.) However, don't be a bull in a china shop. Avoid conflict with others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Romantic relationships could break up if you're not careful. You want to get to the bottom of things, and you want to know the truth. You're going to wipe the slate clean and start again.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Appliances and machinery will break down today. You want to fix them and make sweeping changes for the better. However, don't force these changes on others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Arguments about politics, religion or philosophical points of view will only upset your peace of mind. Don't even go there; it's not worth it.

SCORPIO: (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Issues seem to be black-and-white today. People are entrenched in their views. Don't argue about shared possessions and joint property. Wait until another day to discuss these issues.

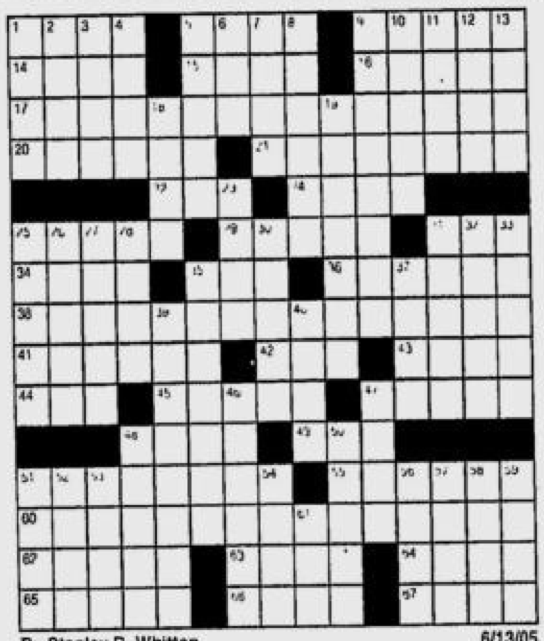
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Intense encounters with others could reveal secrets you've been hiding. They can also reveal aspects of yourself or someone else you chose to ignore. (Be kind.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can see a better way of doing something at work. You know how to fix something. Just don't step on the toes of others during the process.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Romantic relationships could break up if you force things right now. It's up to you. You want to air your grievances and start anew. Perhaps this can be done if you go gently.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a good day to fix appliances and make repairs at home. However, don't be pushy with family members. They will react!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

6/13/05

ACROSS
1 High point
5 Sibilant jeer
9 Customary practice
14 Christmas
15 Sal's canal
16 Irregularly notched
17 Hemingway title
20 Practical trainee
21 Bestows in abundance
22 Neon or argon
24 Aussie's friend
25 Lace up again
29 Greek letter
31 Grippe
34 Long narrative poem
35 Born in Paris
36 Ice houses?
38 Do a reality check
41 Containing vinegar
42 Competed
43 Hoopster Archibald
44 MA follower
45 Long narrow region
47 Check writer
48 Malaria symptom
49 Mineral springs
51 Pay out
55 Future watcher
60 Rarely
62 Dental exams?
63 Hideout
64 Woody's boy
65 Zellweger of "Chicago"
66 Terminates
67 Get well

DOWN
1 Against
2 Joe McCarthy's man Roy
3 Encounter
4 Otherwise
5 Coloring agent
6 Retirement letters
7 Part of a window
8 Big Bird's street
9 Tradition
10 Get up
11 Nonsense!
12 Words of understanding
13 "__ of the d'Urbervilles"
18 Encourage
19 Prolonged applause
23 Be in a huff
25 Brief summation
26 Period
27 Used a stopwatch
28 "New Jack City" co-star
30 Artist Matisse
31 Venture
32 Entertainer Lenya
33 Theater employee
35 Matins division
37 Turner of Hollywood
39 Mask
40 Bugle call
46 Secondhand purchase
47 Cut back
48 White poplar
50 Rains hard
51 Type of mat or bell
52 As to
53 Read quickly
54 Abba of Israel
56 Oriental maidservant
57 Apple center
58 "Damn Yankees" role
59 Organic compound
61 Put a __ on it!

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

U	P	P	E	R	S	■	C	A	T	A	R	A	C	T
M	U	S	S	E	L	■	H	O	O	L	I	G	A	N
B	R	A	S	S	Y	■	I	N	S	O	L	E	N	T
R	E	L	E	T	■	A	D	E	S	T	E	■	■	■
A	R	M	S	R	A	C	E	■	■	■	S	A	S	S
■	■	■	■	A	R	C	■	H	A	D	■	S	A	T
P	R	O	F	I	L	E	■	O	C	A	R	I	N	A
R	E	Z	O	N	E	D	■	T	H	R	O	A	T	Y
I	M	O	G	E	N	E	■	S	I	E	N	N	A	S
G	E	N	■	D	E	S	■	E	N	D	■	■	■	■
S	T	E	M	■	■	■	W	A	G	E	L	E	S	S
■	■	■	O	F	F	S	E	T	■	V	I	L	L	A
R	I	S	S	O	L	E	S	■	P	I	N	I	O	N
A	D	H	E	R	E	N	T	■	E	L	U	D	E	D
H	A	Y	S	E	E	D	S	■	A	S	S	E	S	S

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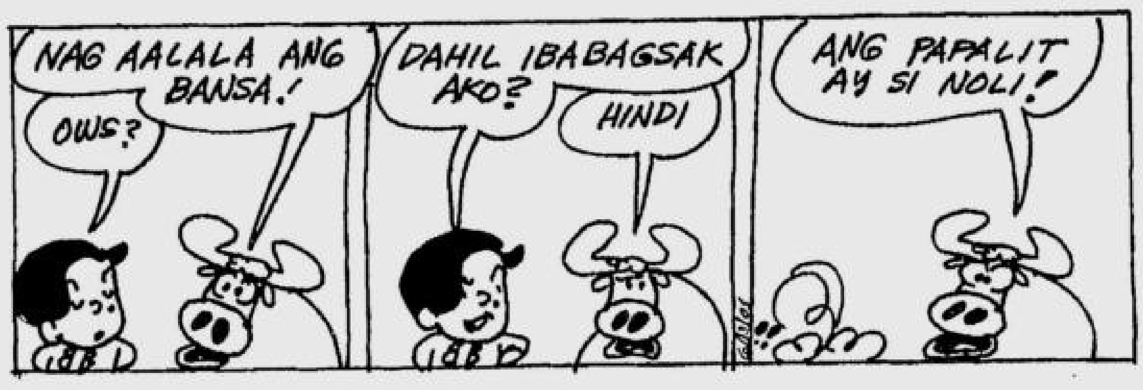
6/13/05

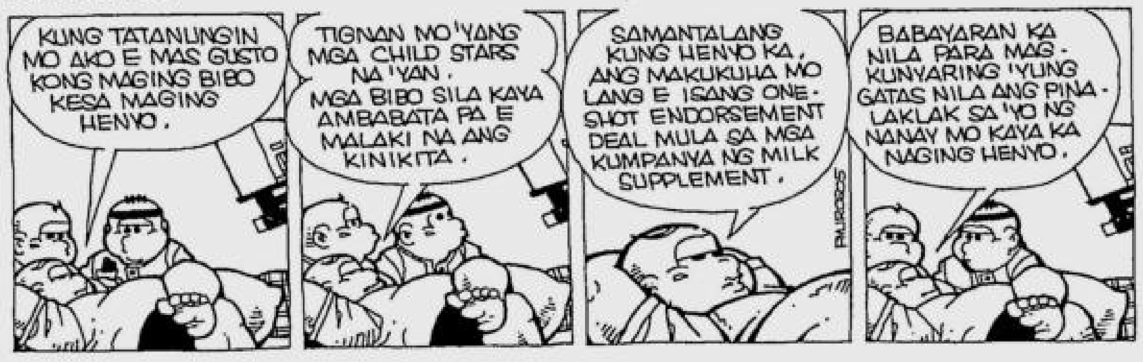
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAG AALALA ANG BANSA!
OWS?
DAHIL IBABAGSAK AKO?
HINDI
ANG PAPALIT AY SI NOLI!

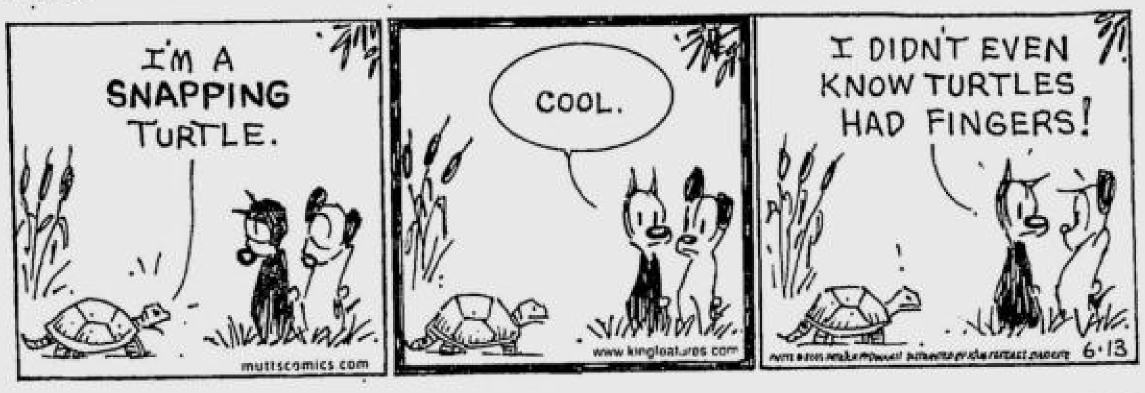
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KUNG TATANUNGIN MO AKO E MAS GUSTO KONG MAGING BIBO KESA MAGING HENYO.
TIGNAN MO 'YANG MGA CHILD STARS NA 'YAN. MGA BIBO SILA KAYA AMBABATA PA E MALAKI NA ANG KINIKITA.
SAMANTALANG KUNG HENYO KA, ANG MAKUKUHA MO LANG E ISANG ONE-SHOT ENDORSEMENT DEAL MULA SA MGA KUMPANYA NG MILK SUPPLEMENT.
BABAYARAN KA NILA PARA MAGKUNYARING 'YUNG GATAS NILA ANG PINALAKLAK SA 'YO NG NANAY MO KAYA KA NAGING HENYO.

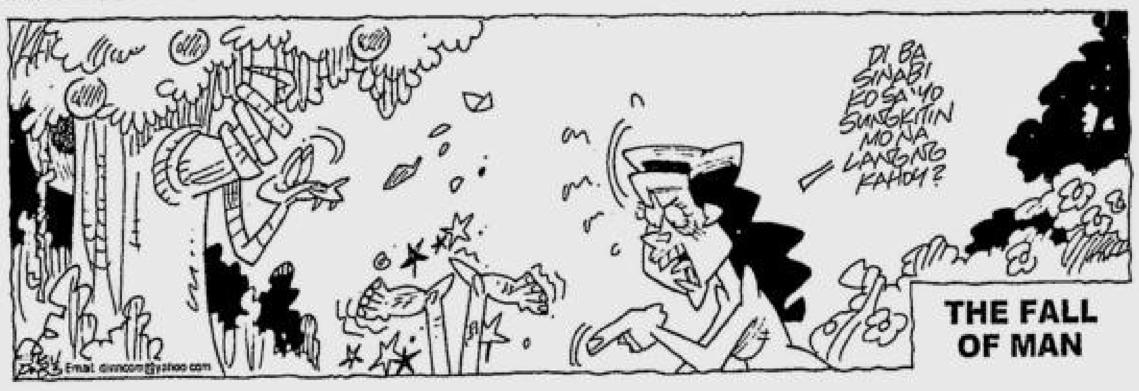
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'M A SNAPPING TURTLE.
COOL.
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW TURTLES HAD FINGERS!
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
6·13

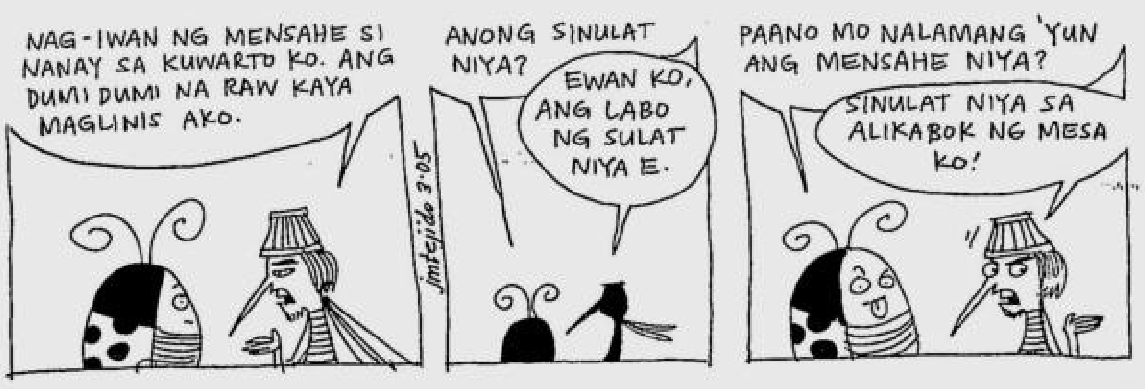
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


DI BA SINABI KO SA 'YO SUNGKITIN MO NA LANG NG KAHOY?
THE FALL OF MAN
Email: divincom@yahoo.com

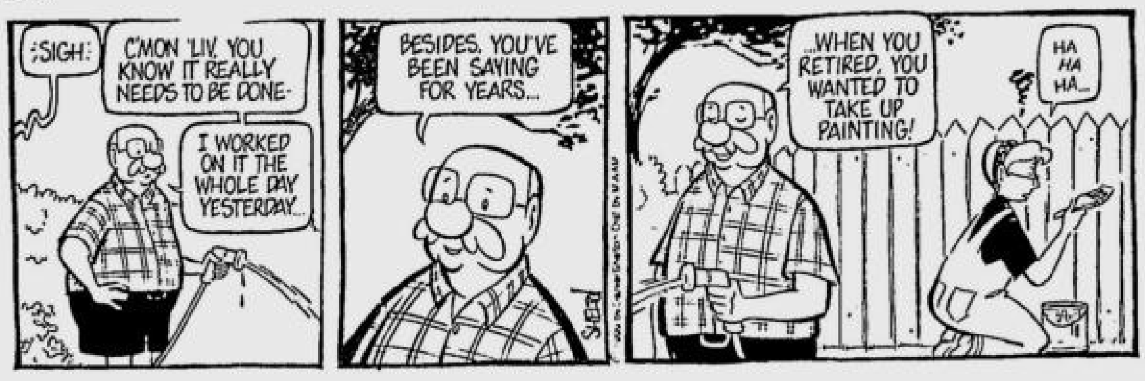
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAG-IWAN NG MENSAHE SI NANAY SA KUWARTO KO. ANG DUMI DUMI NA RAW KAYA MAGLINIS AKO.
ANONG SINULAT NIYA?
EWAN KO, ANG LABO NG SULAT NIYA E.
PAANO MO NALAMANG 'YUN ANG MENSAHE NIYA?
SINULAT NIYA SA ALIKABOK NG MESA KO!
jmtejido 3·05

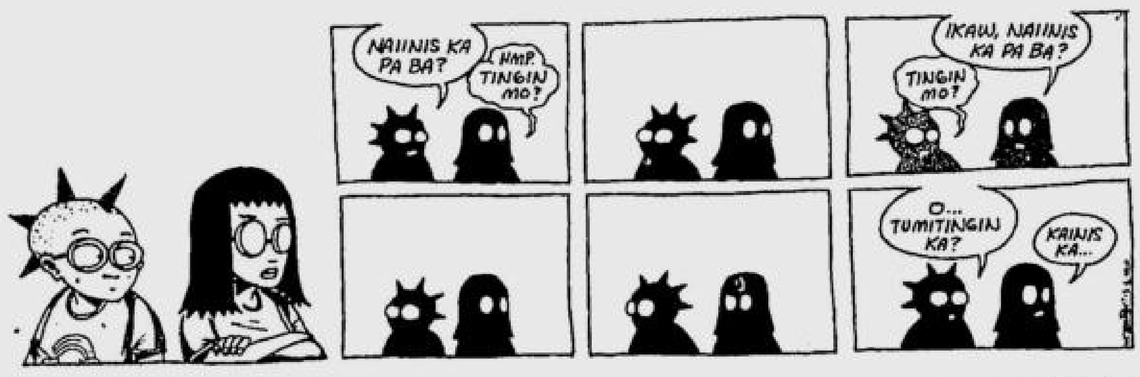
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


:SIGH:
C'MON 'LIV. YOU KNOW IT REALLY NEEDS TO BE DONE-
I WORKED ON IT THE WHOLE DAY YESTERDAY...
BESIDES, YOU'VE BEEN SAYING FOR YEARS...
...WHEN YOU RETIRED, YOU WANTED TO TAKE UP PAINTING!
HA HA HA...

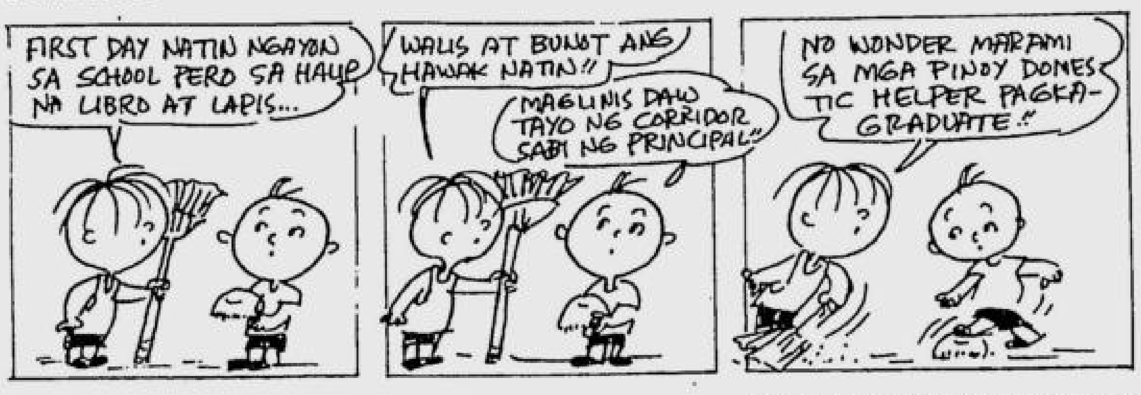
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


NAIINIS KA PA BA?
HMP. TINGIN MO?
IKAW, NAIINIS KA PA BA?
TINGIN MO?
O... TUMITINGIN KA?
KAINIS KA...

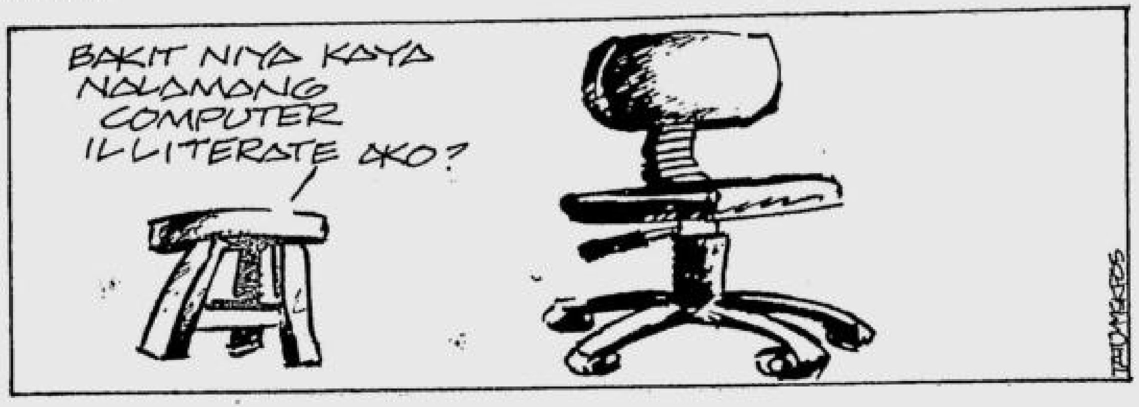
LOVEKNOTS

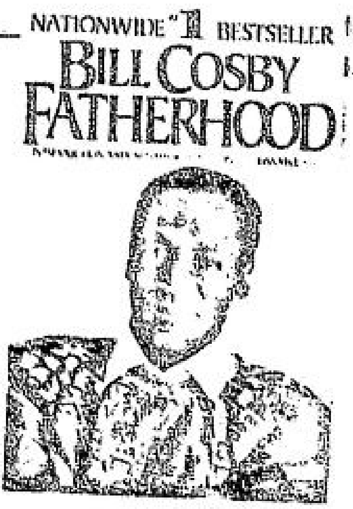
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


FIRST DAY NATIN NGAYON SA SCHOOL PERO SA HALIP NA LIBRO AT LAPIS...
WALIS AT BUNOT ANG HAWAK NATIN!!
MAGLINIS DAW TAYO NG CORRIDOR SABI NG PRINCIPAL!!
NO WONDER MARAMI SA MGA PINOY DOMESTIC HELPER PAGKAGRADUATE!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

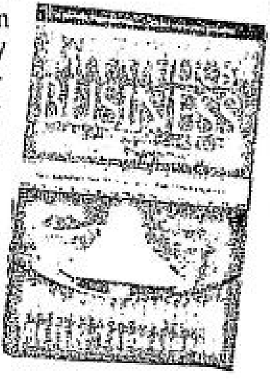

BAKIT NIYA KAYA NALAMANG COMPUTER ILLITERATE AKO?



Books for Father's Day

GET Dad books that will boost his faith and confidence at work.

"Ten Commandments of Working in a Hostile Environment" is based on the best-selling video series of T.D. Jakes. He shows readers how to use Christian principles in the workplace, using faith as the key to happiness and productivity. Bishop Jakes explains how people can rise above petty conflicts, turn obstacles into opportunities, and let God do His work in their lives every day-even when they're coping with complaining co-workers or difficult bosses.



Another great read for Dad, **"My Father's Business,"** provides practical guidelines and tested wisdom on resisting moral compromise. It is also an account of how a high-level executive can continue serving God while in business.

"Fatherhood" is written by Bill Cosby, America's favorite TV dad. He tells us that fatherhood is "pretending the present you love most is soap-on-a-rope, helping your children learn English as a foreign language, knowing that 'Everything's okay, Dad' means 'I haven't killed anyone.'" Fathers will love this book with a sidesplitting look at the lighter side of fatherhood.

The books are available at National Book Store.

A feast of children's books

From page D1

should have the books.

It also provides clues on what constitutes popular reading. The list is a happy combination of fiction and nonfiction, folklore and modern tales, history and myth.

The list comes with the caveat from Adarna head Ani Almario that the titles are not all bestsellers. Some may have enjoyed an institutional bulk order, thus boosting its sales to at least 30,000 copies each. A few are still in newsprint editions, although Adarna does not anymore publish in newsprint nowadays.

The Top 25 at 25, as the roll of honor is billed, includes the following titles in alphabetical order:

"Alpabetong Filipino," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Paul Eric Roca, 2003. A fun alphabet book that is colorful and accurate, with all 28 letters of the Filipino alphabet represented.

"Ang Alamat ng Ampalaya," by Augie Rivera and illustration by Kora D. Albano. A consistent favorite because it is a well-told creative tale that easily lends itself to oral activities. Lends itself well to dramatization.

"Ang Barumbadong Bus," by Rene Villanueva and illustration by Jo Ann Bereber-Gando. The tale of a typical bus going berserk in the streets of Manila. Bilingual.

"Ang Mahiyaing Manok," by Rebecca Añonuevo and illustration by Ruben de Jesus, 2000. A story in verse about an extremely shy rooster that gains self-confidence against a crow. Artwork was a runner-up in the 2000 Noma Concours for Children's Picture Book Illustrations. More recently, at the 2004 Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Conference in New York, even the children's literature icon Tomie de Paola favorably commented on De Jesus' art. Bilingual.

"Ang Pambihirang Buhok ni Raquel," by Luis Gatmaitan and illustration by Beth Parrocha-Doctolero, 1999. A poignant story that unravels the secret of Raquel's enviable hairstyles. Bilingual.

"Ang Tao sa Malacañang," by Leonardo Mendez and illustration by Jordan Santos. Brief biographies of Philippine presidents.

"Bru-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha Bru-hi-hi-hi-hi-hi," by Ompong Remigio and illustration by Roland Mechael Ilagan. An old woman is stereotyped as a witch, until a child discovers the true person behind the *bruha* image. A consistent bestseller.

"Dragong Pula," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Jess Abrera Jr. Out of print.

"Gusto Ko ng Buwan at Mga Bituin," by Virgilio Almario and illustration by Joanne de Leon. An imaginative tale for beginning readers.

si Dindo Pundido

"SI DINDO Pundido," written and illustrated by Jomike Tejido

"Ibong Adarna," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Gualberto Ortega and Jordan Santos. The popular tale of the three brothers attempting to help their ailing father-king and resisting the spell of the magical Adarna's song. A consistent bestseller. Bilingual.

"Isang Mayang Uhaw," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Jimmy Torres. An old fable about a bird who tries to drink from a nearly empty glass of water. Bilingual.

"Jose Rizal," by Mike Bigornia and illustration by Ibarra Crisostomo. A painless way to read about the national hero.

"Luis and the Enchanted Creatures," written and illustrated by Marcy Dans Lee. Luis meets monsters from Philippine mythology but is more amused than frightened.

"Madyik Banig," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Joanne de Leon. Out of print.

"Munting Sinag-Araw," by Gloria Villaraza-Guzman and illustrated by Lani Maestro. Where sunbeams go during the day show the importance of the sun. Bilingual.

"Nemo ang Batang Papel," by Rene Villanueva and illustration by Haru Sabijon. Out of print.

"Penpen de Sarapen," by Roberto Alonzo and illustration by Jess Abrera Jr. A collection of childhood rhymes and chants.

"Si Daginding," by Roberto Alonzo and illustration by Renato Gamos. Daginding, the mouse, journeys to the moon but is disappointed that it is no ball of cheese, after all.

"Si Dindo Pundido," written and illustrated by Jomike Tejido. Dindo with his humble glow, does something heroic by rescuing his siblings with the brighter shine. Tejido's clay creations are unusual illustrations.

"Si Emang Engkantada," by Rene Villanueva and illustration by Alfonso Oñate and Wilfredo Pollarco. Bilingual. A favorite of the author and one of his early stories, the tale urges children to take care of the environment.

"Si Pagong at si Matsing," by Danilo Consumido and illustration by Willfredo Pollarco. The well-loved story of how the turtle outwits the monkey; first told by Rizal.

"Si Pilandok at ang Manok na Nangingitlog ng Manok," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Kora D. Albano. This trickster of a folk hero outwits the greedy *datu* in search of gold. Bilingual.

"Si Pilandok at ang Mga Buwaya," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Kora D. Albano. Pilandok, Mindanao's Juan Tamad, has to cross a river guarded by crocodiles. Bilingual.

"Si Pilandok sa Kaharian sa Dagat," by Victoria Añonuevo and illustration by Kora D. Albano. Bilingual. The cunning Pilandok saves himself from the punishment of the greedy *datu*.

"Sino Ako?" by Roberto Alonzo and illustration by Albert Gamos. A book of riddles using clue sounds.

The author is a member of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People. Call 3723548 or e-mail adarnahouse@adarna.com.ph.

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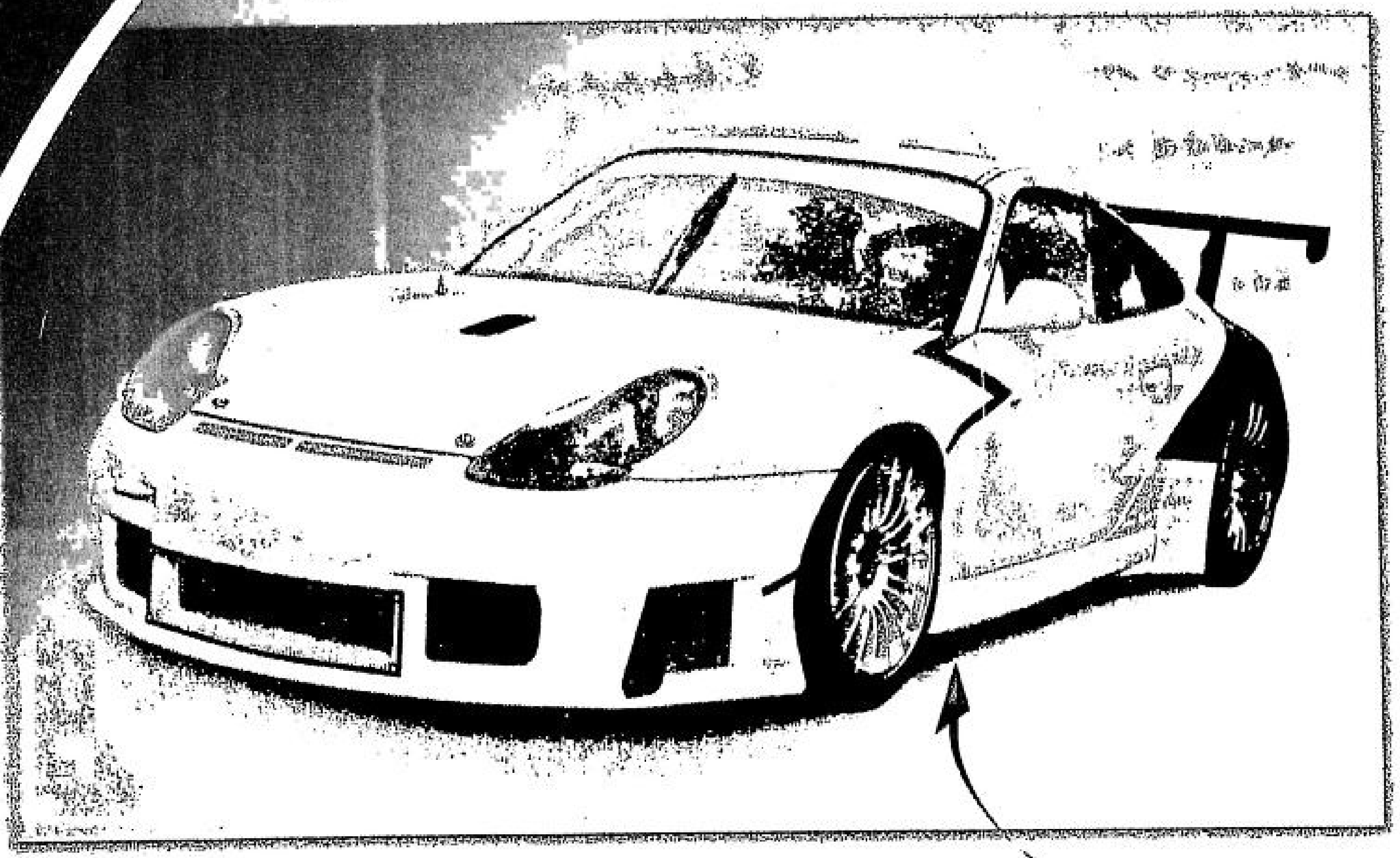

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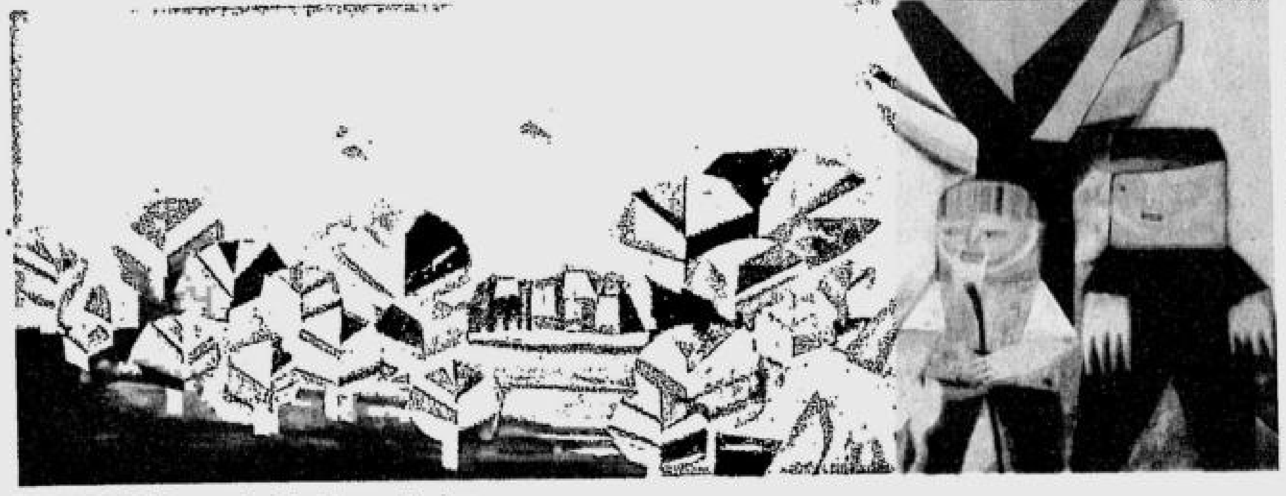
"VERDANT Prosperity," by Romeo Forbes

Art as reforestation, renewal

By Lito B. Zulueta

THE FRENCH Spring, the yearly festival of Francophile culture, takes on the cause of cross-cultural pollination with the publication of the children's book, "Elias and the Trees," and the exhibit of the paintings by noted young artist Romeo Forbes that were used in the book.

The painting exhibit opens today at the Glorietta 4 Art Space (tel. 7528049) of the Ayala Center in Makati. The studies made for the paintings will be exhibited tomorrow

ART/ E2

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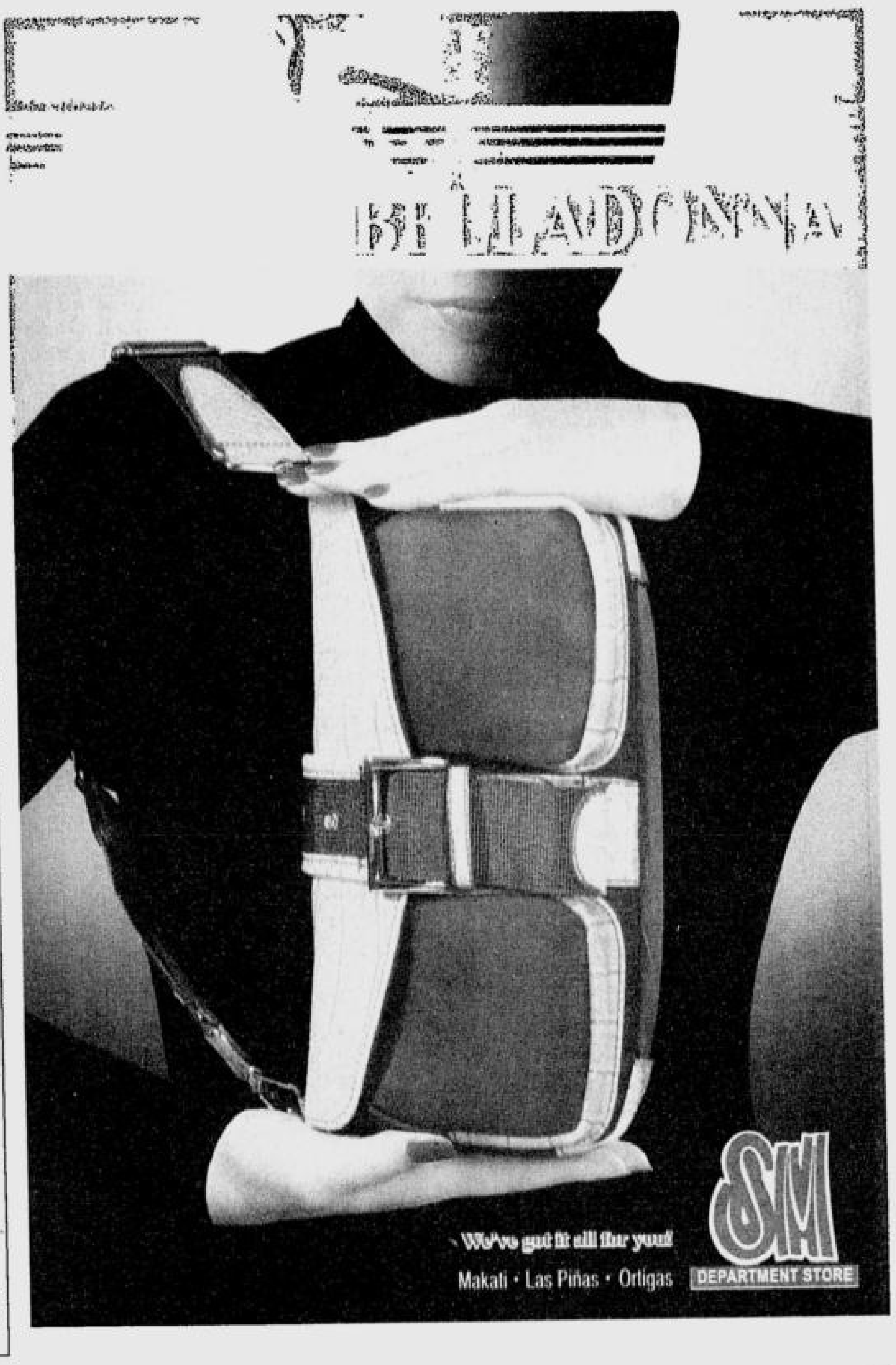

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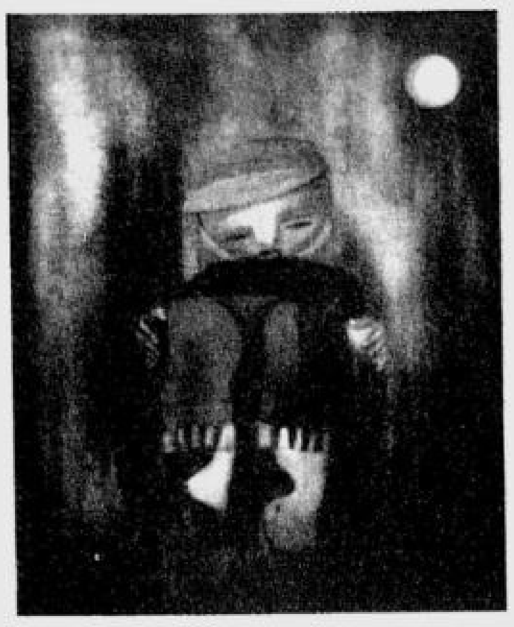
Art as reforestation, renewal

· From page E1



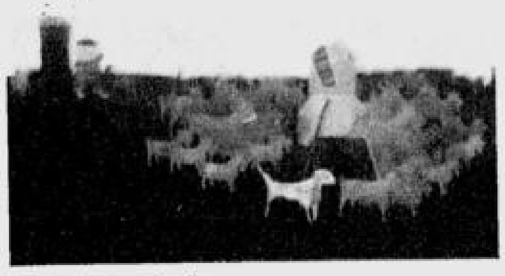
"THE MARK of a Traveler"

at the Crucible Gallery (6356061) on the fourth level of SM Megamall.

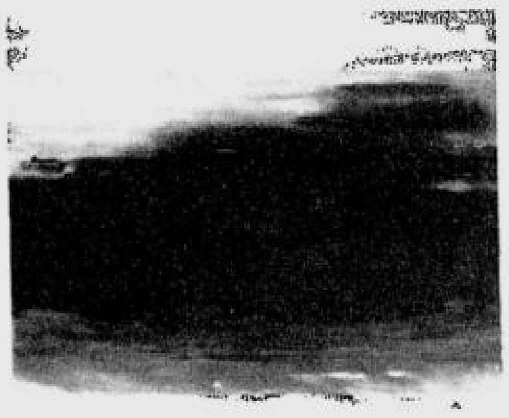
The pollination is quaint since "Elias and the Trees" is a Philippine adaptation in English and Filipino by Augi Rivera of "The Man Who Planted Trees" by the French writer Jean Giono. Giono's ecological fable, about a man who plants 100 acorns a day in Provence amid the destruction of World War I until his death in 1947, has been a well-loved tale since it appeared in Vogue magazine in the 1950s. Its strengths are its simplicity and sincerity.

The Philippine adaptation, published and beautifully printed by the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House (7313522, 4061611 locals 8252 or 8278), situates the story in Philippine history, from World War II up to the Edsa Revolution, and recasts Giono's Elzéard Bouffier as Elias Dakila, who devotes his life to reforesting the barren Tierra Verde region by planting 100 *narra* seeds daily for nearly five decades. Despite the vicissitudes of war and the vagaries of fate, Elias plods on, renewing the land.

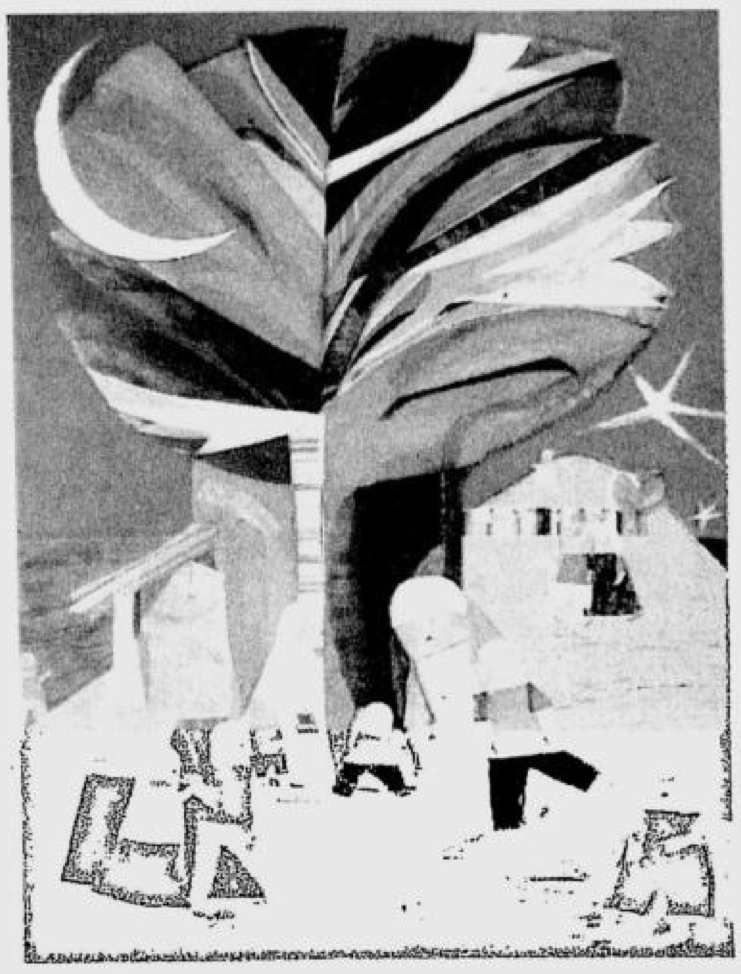
Part of the resilience of the eco-fable is that it lends itself well to publishing collaboration with artists. The latest Anglo-American edition of Giono's work has woodcut engravings



"FIRST Meeting"



"JOURNEY"



"FINALE"

"LEGACY

Rome
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Art and the city

By Constantino C. Tejero

NOW starting to make its presence felt in the local art world is what we'd call abstract social realism, a certain way of depicting urban reality with no image in sight but chiefly through texture and chromatics.

Another of its exponent is Julio Austria. The 26-year-old artist declares this affinity in his first solo exhibit "Urban Jungle," nine pieces in mixed media and oil on canvas, until June 19 in Pasilyo Victorio Edades, 4/F, Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Here the artist has necessarily limited his palette to near-monochrome, mostly gray and brown with streaks and splotches of ochre, blue, yellow, red, orange, green, pink. And he works on shaped canvases, irregular formats of unusual materials, approximating the Post-Painterly artists.

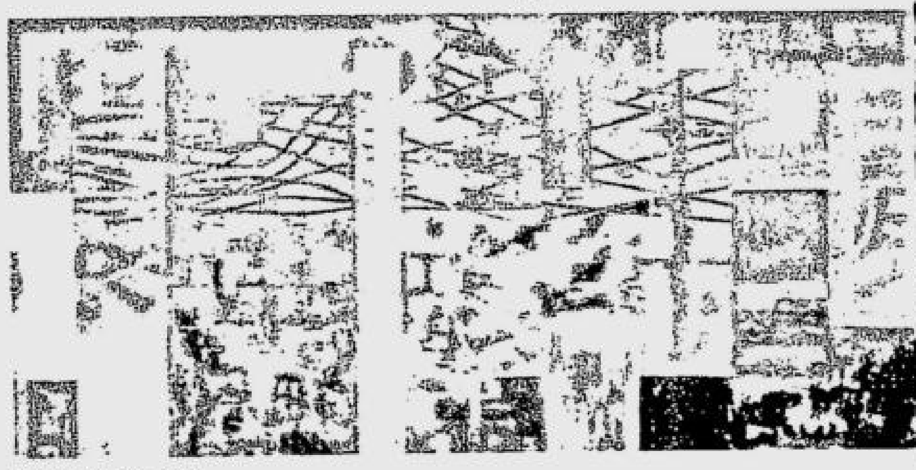
Curator Bobi Valenzuela, whom Austria acknowledges as a major influence, describes the young man's vision of the city as "a horrid landscape showing signs of decay due to lack of cohesive planning, intelligent zoning, sound design and sheer ignorance of the environment. Instead of a habitable place for its residents, he gives us a mish-mash of residential areas, office spaces, industrial zones, slum areas lumped into one and tangled together in a spaghetti-like mess of electric and telephone wires, highways, overpasses, sidewalks with gaping manholes risking lives and limbs of both inhabitants and commuters."

As with any abstraction, the viewer wouldn't know the subject until he reads the title. And the titles reveal all that's chaotic about living in the Big City: "Rush-Hour Chaos," "Dysfunctional Living," "Divided and Distorted."

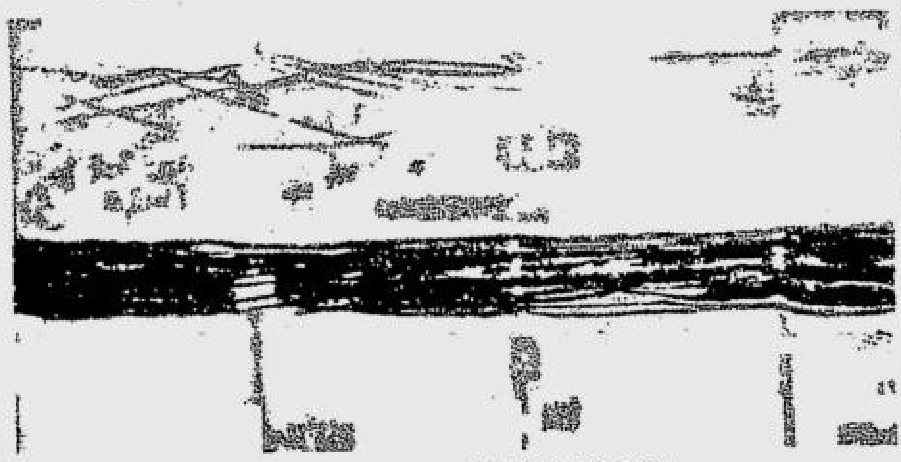
"The Air We Breathe," with its billowing smoke-gray and the canvas peaked like gables and rooftops, is presumably about pollution.

"Undergrounds" must be the underpasses, while "Obstructive Patterns" would be either those giant billboards or the MMDA's road obstructions and street railings.

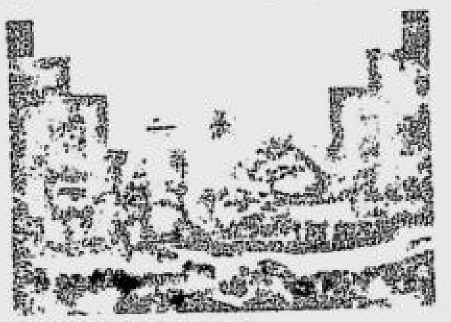
The exhibit is not totally abstract, however, as a few pieces hint at image, such



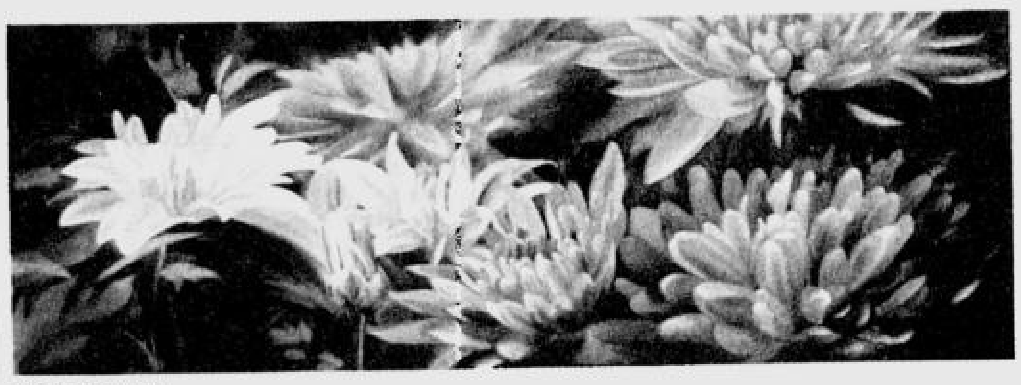
"URBAN Jungle"



"CABLELUTION"



"RUSH-HOUR Chaos"



"MAGENTA"

Galura's summer in June

By Robert Bjorn Santos
Contributor

ALFRED Galura once again dazzled the art community with his watercolor oeuvres in his exhibit "Caliraya Summer" which opened on June 8, at Gallery Nine, Megamall.

Galura exhibits 30 pieces from this year's vivid Flower Festival in Baguio and breathtaking scenes from Caliraya.

Different from his idyllic landscapes, his floral renditions unveil his unabashed passion for his chosen medium.

In "Baguio Flower Festival '05," the artist overwhelms the viewer with the resonating beauty of this still-life. With a purist technique, he painstakingly manipulates the pigment to achieve a tight composition.

The importance of light is carefully introduced in this painting as the radiance penetrates space and gently kisses the petals. Galura, always favoring natural light, comments, "The white blooms are actually the paper itself. I never use white paint."

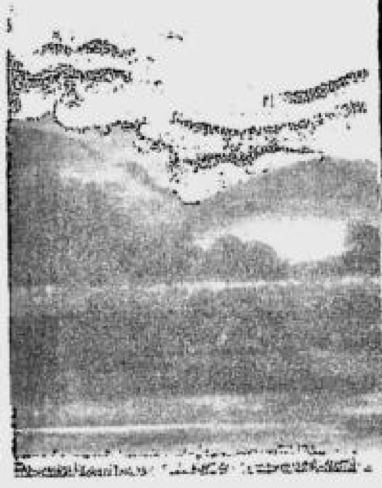
His "Baguio Blooms I" presents his facility in controlling the value, the relative lightness or darkness of an area, of his blooms and their stems. Yellow flowers contain yellow-green and orange-yellow hues while the pink flowers project variations of magenta and red. The green stems vibrate with yellow-green and cyan tinctures. Using the techniques he learned through discovery, Galura creates another masterful still-life.

The artist tells this writer that the computer has been a great aid in creating compositions. Whether on his bike or on foot, Galura earnestly travels to explore new paths, terrain and sites. Armed with a digital camera, he takes snapshots of these.

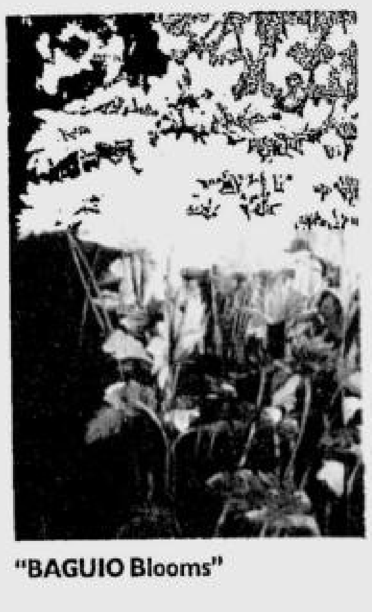
From his Sony Cybershot digital camera, Galura uploads a whole day's worth of pictures to his computer. Manipulating the elements in each picture permits him to form new compositions.

Moreover, working with Rowney, a watercolor brand from England that responds well with water and paper, has lent the artist more authority in creating graceful compositions.

Take, for example, "Caliraya at Midday." The serenity of this blue piece is accurately punctuated by a boat on the left foreground. Two men occupy the humble fishing boat. Thanks to the calm waters and lush greenery



"CALIRAYA Dawn"



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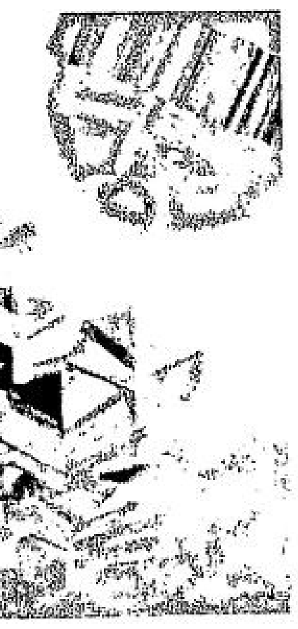


o Forbes' paintings ias and the Trees' apture the struggle ptimism of Jean Giono's oved eco-tale

by Michael McCurdy.

For the Philippine adaptation, Forbes, who has won major prizes in the Petron and Metrobank art contests, employs his vintage naïf figures that not only capture the fabular nature of Giono's tale, but also provides an innocent counterpoint to the depredations of man.

Giono had looked at his work as a testament to hope and optimism in the face of despair and pessimism (the original title of the magazine article in 1954 was "The Man Who Planted Hope and Grew Happiness"). He had wanted to prove that man is ultimately redeemable—that man, according to the story, "could be as effective as God in domains other than destruction."

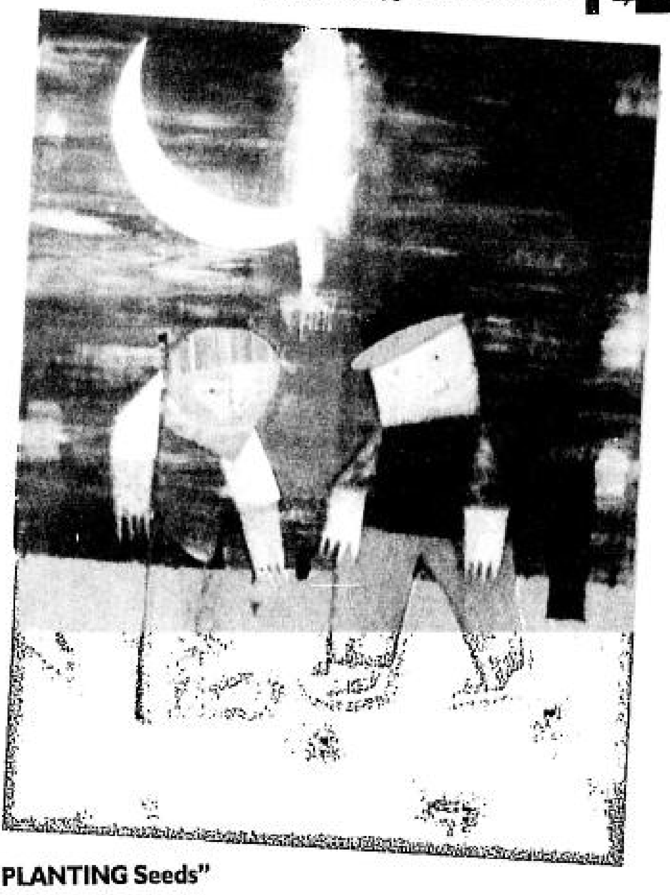
Giono viewed man as capable of godlike generosity:

"When I consider that a single man, relying only on his own simple physical and moral resources, was able to transform a desert into this land of Canaan, I am convinced that, despite everything, the human condition is truly admirable. But when I take into account the constancy, the greatness of soul and the selfless dedication that was needed to bring about this transformation, I am filled with an immense respect for this old, uncultured peasant who knew how to bring about a work worthy of God."

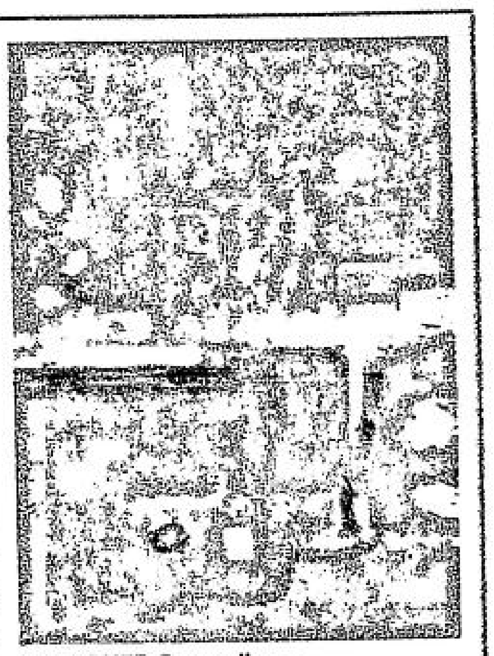
In his colors and lines, Forbes provides more than a reflection of Giono's sense of generosity and abundance. At the start of the story, when the speaker comes face to face with denudation and destruction, Forbes's dark, stern colors impress the reader with the feeling of desolation and hopelessness.

But toward the end, when the fruits of Elias Dakila's labors emerge, Forbes unleashes a riot of colors: burgundy, gold and emerald. The rich palette shows the fullness of nature recharged and renewed.

The exhibit of Romeo Forbes's paintings for the book "The Man Who Planted Trees," will run at the Glorietta Art Space until June 30. The exhibit of the studies for the paintings will run at the Crucible until June 19. The book is published by the UST Publishing House under the auspices of Canvas, a nonstock, nonprofit organization that helps Filipino writers, artists and artisans. The exhibits have the support of the Alliance Française de Manille, French Embassy, Petron Foundation and Metrobank Foundation.



"PLANTING Seeds"



"CROOKED Streets"

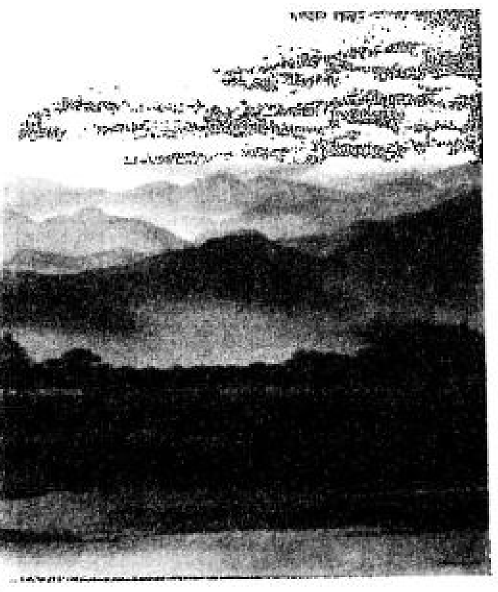
as "Crooked Streets," the most colorful of the lot. Dominated by flame-red, it shows a blue outline of lamppost, a cross, and a crooked line which could be a contour of a street or a slithering serpent.

In "Cablelution," the image becomes literally palpable, as the artist has integrated electrical cables into the piece until it then becomes a combine painting or a painted relief.

The centerpiece is "Urban Jungle," an impressive work of predominantly gray geometric shapes constructed on canvas and metal sheets, its textures ranging from rough to smooth. The impression is one of seeing a row of tenements, a condominium, a cathedral, with buntings in the sky.

Austria is a member of the Cavite-based artists' group Anting-anting. A graduate of Fine Arts, major in Painting, from University of Santo Tomas, he counts among his favorites De Kooning, Joya, Tàpies, Miró, Lao Lianben, Gus Albor.

This young man is ripening into a fine artist. And he has the depth to back it up.



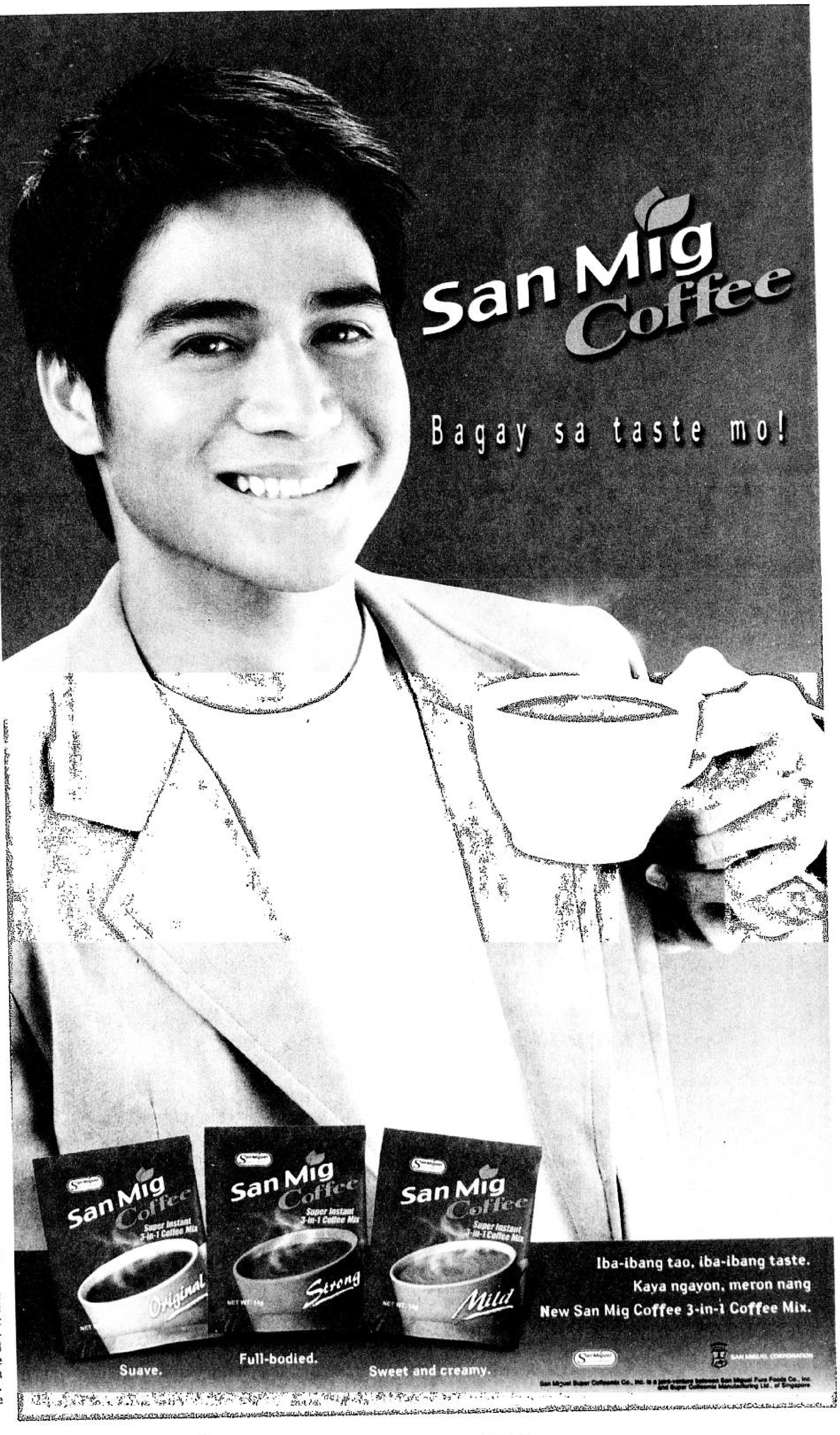
in the background, this piece provides a soothing appeal to the onlooker.

A verdant shore occupies half of "Mountain Lake." This piece brings forth tranquility. It evokes the ideal Caliraya. That is, a pure environment, which frees its visitors and residents from cosmopolitan-induced anxiety and frivolous worries.

When asked why he chose Caliraya as the subject of his landscapes, Galura simply replied, "Because it is different from the other places that I've painted. It is different from Batanes, Baguio, Pampanga and Mindoro."

The wanderlust of Galura barely rests. One day, sooner than later, he will awaken and search for another subject to paint. Whether it is a scintillating still-life or a winning landscape, each phenomenal piece is realized through his unsinkable passion—to create and recreate life, to share this creation with others and to proudly exist as a Filipino artist.

"Caliraya Summer" is on view until June 18. Call 6877302.



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